GROUP-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

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GROUP-CENTERED

A Way of Releasing the Creative Power of Groups

LEADERSHIP

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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY · BOSTON
NEW YORK · CHICAGO · DALLAS · ATLANTA · PALO ALTO

The Riverside Press Cambridge

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The Riverside Press
Cambridge Massachusetts
Printed in the U.S.A.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The view of leadership that is developed in the present volume is essentially novel. Here the problem of human direction by other human beings is not presented as a mere development of techniques of control, or of tricks by means of which one person may dominate others in a social situation. Dr. Gordon's program is an application of true democracy to small as well as to large groups. He does not ask the reader to approve a polarized social situation, with one leader and many followers organized in a set pattern like iron filings in a magnetic field. Rather, the type of organization that comes to life in these pages is one in which a group of co-workers participate together both in formulating objectives and in acting with each other so as to achieve these commonly recognized ends.

The effect of such constructive group activity on the participating individuals is described. As the strangers who come together when a new group is formed learn to know each other and begin to interact with one another, changes take place not only in the social organization itself but also in the individual members. Some of these personality changes are similar to those that have been described as resulting from well-conducted nondirective counseling. It is reported that individuals who work together in this way come to feel personally more secure, less fearful of other people, and less defensive. Participants in group behavior of the sort described may thus become more spontaneous in their social reactions as they discover in themselves new incentives to effective work. This type of personal regeneration does not, of course, take place in every individual. The pattern, nevertheless, seems to be consistent for many of those who wholeheartedly participate.

In general, therefore, this volume seems to offer an interesting solution of one aspect of the age-old problem of the adjustment of the individual person to society and of society to the individual. The author and his co-workers would be the first to attest that this new method is not yet complete in all its details. Nevertheless, it seems that the principles of group-centered leadership described here can be applied in a wide variety of social situations.

For this reason, the imaginative and resourceful educator, the personnel manager, and the administrator — among others — will gain from the book a point of view that can be applied in everyday life. Indeed, it is hard to believe that anyone who is preparing for or engaged in any field of work which involves other people can fail to gain from this book both a working concept and a constructive philosophy of leadership that will have a lasting effect on his whole style of life as he deals with his fellow human beings.

LEONARD CARMICHAEL

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PREFACE

Nothing in my professional life has been as personally rewarding as the experience of witnessing as a counselor the process by which an emotionally troubled person gradually throws off the shackles of his dependency upon real or imagined authority until he can finally feel, as one client expressed it, "Now I am free to be me." The idea that a similar process might be set in motion by the leaders of different groups in which people work, play, learn, and worship has become for me both a challenge and a devotion. To watch a collection of people, at first passively dependent upon their leader or reactively resistant to his leadership, develop into a group of active and creative participants who can take a constructive part in defining the group's objectives and work effectively to reach them — this experience also can be an exciting and rewarding one.

This book actually began as a brief monograph describing one such experience. Those of us who had observed first-hand a certain group's development felt strongly that we should share our experience with others. In the process of trying to describe the experience, however, it soon became apparent that what happened to the group was not the entire story — there was also a philosophy and a theoretical rationale that emerged more clearly as we, the leaders, planned our approach to the group. And even the process of planning itself became something we wanted to communicate, for we saw that this too was an important part of the story of the group's later development. Thus, our original purpose broadened and became one of first trying to communicate to other leaders a particular philosophy and theory of leadership; second, telling the story of how we as leaders gradually and sometimes painfully tried to adopt and learn to implement this philosophy and theory; and finally describing what happened to the members of this group as a result of their brief exposure to this type of leadership. Whether the effort to communicate has been successful remains to be seen as other leaders discover whether our experience has any real meaning for them.

It is for the leaders of many different kinds of groups that this book has been written. It is not a scientific report of a rigidly controlled experiment; rather it is a case study, documented by the subjective reports of people who shared a group experience. This book is also an invitation, and at times an appeal, for other leaders to try out a new pattern of leadership that will yield them the reward of seeing people become self-directing and self-responsible. Thus, the book is addressed to teachers, managers, administrators, discussion leaders, supervisors, committee chairmen, ministers, coaches, coordinators, superintendents, union leaders — in a word, to all who find themselves responsible for helping groups function and develop.

Part One presents the philosophical and theoretical foundations of a particular kind of leadership, one in which the basic aim of the leader is to tap and develop the creative resources of his group members. Part Two describes an experience in which the leaders of a single learning group plan and carry out this leadership approach and observe and record the process of change and development within the group. The concluding chapter of Part Two describes some of the effects of this experience on the members' attitudes and behavior immediately after and six months following the group experience.

Part Three was written some time after the book was originally outlined and planned. It is a description and an evaluation of an industrial leader's attempt to try out group-centered leadership in an industrial organization. Because his experiment clearly illustrated the application of this type of leadership to an entirely different kind of group and within the kind of organization which many people feel does not permit the use of group-centered leadership, James Richard, Red Jacket Manufacturing Co., Davenport, Iowa, was asked by the author to write up his experiment for inclusion in this volume (Chapter 12). This chapter will be of particular interest to business and industrial leaders. To the author's knowledge, it is the first description of an attempt to apply in an industrial organization the principles of group-centered leadership so extensively, consistently, and skillfully.

Although the Workshop or learning-group experiment, described in Part Two, was carried on by a *group* of leaders, circumstances determined that the task of writing up this experiment would be assumed by only one of that group. The other members of this leadership team were:

Ross Snyder, Federated Theological Faculty, University of Chicago
George Corwin, National Council of the Y.M.C.A.
Russell Becker, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Wooster College
Phillip Anderson, Associate Pastor, Glenview Community Church, Illinois
Robert Lipgar, Counseling Center, University of Chicago

Each member of this staff group contributed many original ideas during the planning and preparation for the Workshop; all of us shared in the experience of working through our own attitudes and feelings as we sought to adopt a common philosophy of leadership. All of us participated equally in the actual leadership of the Workshop, each carrying out those functions for which he felt uniquely qualified. Robert Lipgar made an additional contribution in connection with the design of the research projects and the collection and analysis of all of the data. Responsibility for the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the leadership approach we utilized in the Workshop was principally the author's, although his ideas were constantly enriched and sharpened by the thinking of the rest of the staff.

Further acknowledgments are gratefully extended to Barbara Fiske (Mrs. Donald W.) for her able assistance during the stage of tabulating and analyzing some of the research data; to Carl R. Rogers and Carter R. Harrison for their valuable suggestions after reading parts of the original manuscript; to Isabelle Wright and Carol Levick, who typed most of the manuscript; and to Julie Porter (Mrs. E. H.), who transcribed all of the recorded interviews with the Workshop delegates.

Funds for the Workshop and the research were provided by the Chicago Theological Seminary and the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago. To the entire staff of the University of Chicago Counseling Center I wish to express my deepest appreciation

for many indirect contributions to this book — for allowing the use of recording equipment and training materials for the Workshop, for providing a member of its secretarial staff while the manuscript was being typed and assembled, and most important, for the intellectual inspiration and personal enrichment that I experienced as a member of this organization. The Counseling Center, more than any other group to which I have belonged, was a vital, creative, and self-directing group whose members found freedom to grow as individuals and to develop as self-responsible and constructive group members. Living with this unique group gave me the basic philosophy that underlies the idea of group-centered leadership, the most important ingredient of which is that groups can truly be trusted.

To Carl R. Rogers, my friend and professional colleague, I owe a deep and special acknowledgment — for his leadership which permitted the Counseling Center to become the kind of group it is, for the challenge of his creative ideas, and for the inspiration of his personal attitudes and values toward individuals and groups.

Finally, I am grateful to my wife, Martha Ann, for her patience and the personal sacrifices she made throughout the period this book slowly took shape.

Subsequent to submitting the book for publication, I resigned from my position on the faculty of the University of Chicago to join the firm of Edward Glaser & Associates. It should not be inferred that all the ideas presented here are necessarily shared by the other members of this firm.

THOMAS GORDON

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Part One

A NEW LEADERSHIP APPROACH

In view of the urgent social need for new patterns of leadership in our society, it is a challenge to try to formulate an approach to leadership that will be socially useful and also add something to our understanding of leadership as a scientific concept. Society might well examine carefully any new pattern of leadership for suggestions and ideas about how leaders can more effectively release the creative and constructive potential of their group members. Part One is an attempt to meet this challenge — a tentative statement of a particular leadership approach which has considerable promise of releasing the creative power of groups.

Traditional leadership approaches have often failed to bring out the constructive forces that exist in group members, because many of these present forms of leadership have tended to foster group members' dependency upon their leader. The individual members of many groups in our society learn to react to their leaders by submitting to the authority upon which the group's leadership has usually been based and upon which it has depended. For many of the existing patterns of leadership in our society can be characterized by different degrees of control and manipulation of the individual by their leaders, often for the purpose of satisfying nonhuman values or for satisfying only the values of the leaders themselves.

A new pattern of leadership needs to be discovered — one that frees the individual from the control of external authority imposed upon him. Society needs to evolve a kind of leadership that puts human values first, a leadership that facilitates man's realization of his creative capacities, man's free expression of his individuality, man's actualization of his own uniqueness.

Because every conception of leadership is necessarily based upon certain assumptions about the nature of man, how we choose to conceptualize an approach to leadership will depend upon our philosophy of the human organism. In Chapter 2 we shall point out two divergent directions in the search for a new leadership pattern, each based upon a different way of viewing man as a person or as a follower. The direction of search we have chosen is one that starts from a positive, constructive and optimistic view of man; hence the search is toward a theory of leadership which relies heavily upon creating the psychological conditions that permit group members to participate actively in defining the group's goals and making group decisions. This kind of "group-centered'" leadership has as its aim the distribution of leadership functions throughout the group so that the creative resources of all the group members — not just of the leader — are available to the group as it attempts to solve its problems.

To help a collection of individuals develop into such a self-responsible and self-directing problem-solving group, the group-centered leader needs to recognize the many barriers standing in the way of individuals' learning how to participate freely and constructively as good group members. People have become accustomed to depending on their leaders for a disproportionate number of the group's required functions, so they find it difficult to become self-directing and self-responsible. Nevertheless, through research and practice we have already discovered that the group-centered leader can overcome many of these barriers if he is genuinely willing to develop a mature group, if he has faith in the potentialities of group members, and if he acquires certain skills of facilitating communication and creating a nonthreatening, permissive atmosphere in the group. When he is successful in his efforts, group members quickly learn how to lead themselves and take an active part in shaping their own destiny.

Society in Search of New Patterns of Leadership

1

Today there is an urgent need for new ideas about leadership. Rapidly changing conditions in our society have made traditional patterns of leadership seem inadequate and often even intolerable. If the last few decades can be characterized as the machine age, the next few may be known as the human age. For man throughout the world is on the march to acquire for himself a new dignity, increased worth, and greater respect. Traditional approaches to leadership often seem to stand in his way, for to some they appear incompatible with a high regard for the dignity of man. A new conception of leadership is urgently needed to match the new conception of man emerging today in our society.

This increasingly strong demand for new leadership patterns seems almost inevitable. As man has acquired greater political freedom, it is only natural that he now wants greater personal freedom where he learns, where he works, where he worships. The human appetite for freedom seems insatiable — once man is given a taste of personal freedom he wants more. Consequently, man is now searching for a kind of leadership that promises him greater freedom in *all* areas of his life. Having already experienced a degree of personal freedom as a result of the democratic forms of political leadership he has created, man is now critically examining the forms of leadership existing in all his social institutions. Some of these traditional patterns of leadership are, therefore, at present either highly suspect or already under attack — in business and industrial organizations, in education, in religious organizations, in the field of mental health, and so on. Wherever leadership rests on a strong foundation of authority and power, it is being seriously questioned.

THE NEED FOR DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP IN A DEMOCRACY

As a nation we have begun to recognize more clearly the dangers from without that threaten our democratic way of governing ourselves. Accordingly, we are harnessing our resources and strengthening our defenses to protect ourselves from the external threat of Communist physical force. As one statesman put it, we are now more clear about what we are up against. Yet we have not even begun to match this with an effort to arrest the forces that threaten democracy from within. Democracy is not of itself an inevitably healthy organism, but is susceptible to weaknesses and illnesses for reasons which have been pointed out repeatedly by critics of this way of life. Now that democracy is being challenged by another political philosophy, it is becoming increasingly apparent that democracy *in practice* is not the same as democracy *in theory*.

Though in theory democracy is deeply rooted in the belief that the group has both the right and the capacity to select its goals and make its decisions, in almost all of our social institutions this right is often reserved only for the leaders of the groups. Perhaps this is because the leaders so often assume that the group members do not always have the capacity to select appropriate goals or make sound decisions. Here is a real weakness in the organism, especially when one recognizes that the minds and hearts of men throughout the world are being won by the promise (though it seems certain to be an unfulfilled promise) that Communism will give each man the opportunity to participate in matters that concern him.

Another symptom of democracy's illness is the fact that although the measure of a people's democracy must be the extent of their *freedom from dependence*, almost all of our institutions, because they are largely based on principles of authority, tend to foster dependence upon an authority. This dependence breeds an outward apathy and submissiveness and an underlying resentment and hostility. In the words of James Marshall:

> Freedom from such dependence is the very basis of democracy. It is necessary if men are to develop and utilize their capacities, if society is to be a balance of their individualities and not a structure of status. Freedom from dependence is requisite to maturity. For the satisfaction achieved through dependence is an uneasy peace in the shadow of some power in which one has little share. By paying the price of dependence one places a cheap value on one's self. (57, pp. 223–224)

For Marshall, freedom from dependence is the criterion of a democratic society. When power is concentrated in a few leaders, then dependence tends to increase.

> Those political, economic, and social forms, those philosophies and ideologies which tend to reduce dependence and thus to minimize its incidences are democratic. Those which tend to increase dependence are autocratic. (57, p. 225)

If this is true, and we firmly believe that it is, then democracy in order to survive must find ways of developing leadership for independence. The challenge that democracy faces is to discover a conception of leadership more consistent with the fundamental democratic principles we have learned to cherish. When discovered, it will need to be so injected into the blood stream of the social organism that it will reach every group and institution in our society.

It is our thesis that society is searching for a kind of leadership that puts human values first. Traditional leadership, based as it is upon authority and power, has often restrained the individual through submission to that authority, and consequently has failed to release all the creative and constructive forces within the individual. Erich Fromm has stated this challenge for society in his *Escape from Freedom:*

> The future of democracy depends on the realization of the individualism that has been the ideological aim of modern thought since the Renaissance. The cultural and political crisis of our day is not due to the fact that there is too much individualism but that what we believe to be individualism has become an empty shell. The victory of freedom is possible only if democracy develops into a society in which the individual, his growth and happiness, is the aim and purpose of culture, in which life does not need any justification in success or anything else, and in which the individual is not subordinated to or manipulated by any power outside of himself. . . . All that matters is that the opportunity for genuine activity be restored to the individual; that the purpose of society and that of his own become identical, not ideologically, but in reality; and that he apply his effort and reason actively to the work he is doing, as something for which he can feel responsible because it has meaning and purpose in terms of his human ends. (29, pp. 270–273)

Here is a plea for the freedom of the individual, a distinctly new kind of freedom — one in which the individual in our society can learn to realize his own individuality. One possible answer to this challenge is a new kind of leadership that will facilitate the process by which citizens can become free from the constraining forces of some kinds of authority and learn how to express their own creative uniqueness.

LEADERSHIP AND MENTAL HEALTH

A further condition in our society has crystallized the idea that leadership is a problem of vital social importance. The fact that mental disease is now largely recognized as essentially a social product has brought society to an examination of itself, in an attempt to isolate and identify those social phenomena which are producing mental disease and emotional disintegration. One of these phenomena is undoubtedly leadership. We know now that the mental health of the members of a group is partly a function of the group's leadership and of the emotional climate created by those in the leader's role.

This significant relationship has been demonstrated in education, for example, by the studies of Anderson (4). They point to the fact that dominating and authoritarian teachers tend to foster students whose behavior is less "socially integrative" than students of more permissive and accepting teachers. The effect upon the emotional life of children in families with different leadership patterns has been demonstrated by a study by Baldwin, Kalhorn, and Breese (8) in which children from homes rated as democratic and accepting were found to be more emotionally stable than children from authoritarian and rejecting homes. Another recent study, published by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan (46), found that the morale of workers was higher in groups whose supervisors "bossed" less, helped more, and gave the workers more opportunities to participate in decisions. As further evidence of the relationship between mental health and group life, we can point to a few brave experiments in which patients in mental hospitals have been given responsibility for governing their own ward activities. In these experiments it appears that merely the experience of *participating actively in deciding one's own destiny* or the experience of being a member of a self-governing group may have positive therapeutic effects for the members of that group.

Although these few studies offer only limited evidence, we can safely expect many more studies in which it will be demonstrated that the mental health of the members of a group is a function of the type of leadership existing in the group. Furthermore, as mental disease becomes perceived more and more as a product of the psychological climate of groups, it is certain that social groups will be used more frequently as the therapeutic medium through which people are helped to achieve greater mental health. As this occurs, it will be even more necessary to focus attention on the group leader as an influence on the psychological climate of his group.

THE CONCERN ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The widespread preoccupation with the problem of leadership is also clearly manifested in our modern industrial and business organizations. In industrial society there has been a radical shift from emphasis upon purely technological problems to a concern for human problems. This has been brought about in no small way by the fact that management no longer can rely exclusively upon power derived from the workers' fears of losing their jobs but must instead now learn new methods of enlisting their cooperation and support — methods that do not depend upon the threat of deprivation or the promise of indulgence. So today in industry and business we are witnessing a kind of revolution — not an industrial revolution but a psychological revolution. Millions of dollars are being spent by business and industry in a search for new patterns of supervision, new management practices, new approaches to better human relations.

Industrial society, if it is to be concerned with its own salvation, must develop its social and human skills to keep pace with its technical skills. To state this more explicitly, as a warning, industry if it is to survive *in a democratic society* must quickly discover ways of operating democratically itself. Management must learn a new kind of leadership — one that rests upon a basic respect for the worker, a trust in the worker's ability to participate constructively in all decisions, and a desire to use the industrial organization to develop the potential of the worker rather than merely use the worker to develop the potential of the organization.

There is evidence that industry is becoming increasingly aware of this, for a handful of industrial leaders are already trying to meet the challenge. One can hardly pick up a journal in the field of personnel and management without finding articles dealing with the problems of "worker-participation" or with experiments in management-worker cooperation. More democratic forms of leadership are being cautiously introduced into a few industrial organizations, but as yet there is no widespread recognition of the urgency of the problem. Many industrial leaders are still hoping something will happen to reverse this trend toward increased respect for the worker as an individual.

A few industrial and business leaders are searching for new principles of management because they sense the incompatability between present-day philosophies of management and the fundamental principles of democracy. James Worthy expresses this idea persuasively:

> If we are concerned with the preservation of "free enterprise" in America and freedom in the world, we must strengthen it by extending its principles more effectively to the internal organization and administration of our own business. Democracy and the "American Way" cannot be preserved by exhortation or by slick

> advertising and propaganda campaigns. First of all, the system must continue to work effectively. It cannot do that for long unless it does a better job of tapping the creative resources, ability, and productivity of its individual members. The 30% of capacity at which the average employee is now working is not sufficient to maintain the system in the face of the demands being placed upon it.[1]

Here is a plea for a new kind of business leadership that will reject exhortation in favor of methods aimed at *releasing* the creative resources of workers and employees.

Industrial and business leaders are searching for new ideas about the supervision and management of men, and they are naturally turning to the social scientists for help. Just how much help they are receiving from this source is a matter of opinion, yet there is reason to believe that the past contribution of social science to these complex problems of leadership in industry has been minimal. Speaking only of the role of the psychologist in industry, Ross Stagner makes the following assessment:

> For much too long a time, the term "industrial psychology" has meant psychology in behalf of management — the techniques of selecting workers, training, rating, increasing efficiency and so on. We are now on the threshold of true "industrial psychology" in which our professional methods and theoretical concepts will be applied to understanding the complex interactions of human beings which characterize the employer-employee relationship. (88, p. 95)

Stagner here emphasizes that psychologists are still only on the threshold of contributing to the solution of the human problems of industrial organizations.

One finds it difficult to disagree with Stagner when some of the present-day activities of social scientists in industry are held up for critical examination. Here we refer to some of the traditional management-oriented activities of industrial psychologists — that is, selection, evaluation, human engineering, morale surveying, and the like. None of these psychological services seems to be answering directly the urgent plea of industrial leaders for a new conception of industrial leadership and management, although each may be making some small contribution toward sensitizing industrial leaders to the significance of human relations in human organizations. Many of these psychological services offer little more than methods which in the final analysis treat only symptomatic problems. At best, most of the studies of leadership in business and industrial organizations conform to the pattern described by Gouldner, in which the social scientists tend

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[1] Address before the Industrial Management Institute, Lake Forest College, May 27, 1948.

> to concentrate on limited aspects of the leader-follower relationship: principally, *to ascertain methods of enhancing the control of leaders over their followers.* Studies which culminate in knowledge that facilitates the control of leadership by followers find no nourishment in a bureaucratic setting. (36, p. 47)

Most studies in the industrial setting have not met the challenge which society poses for the social scientist — to discover a new kind of leadership more consistent with the social and human values of democracy. Arthur Kornhauser sees this limitation and offers a challenge for social science when he writes:

> But psychological activities for industry, in addition to being typically rather narrow and immediate, are subject to an even more distinctive limitation. They are characterized by the fact that business management constitutes a special interest group which manifests its special viewpoint in respect to research as in other matters. Certain areas of research are tabu. Certain crucial variables must not be dealt with. We must avoid explicit analysis of the broad and basic problems of *power and authority* in economic life. Management's prerogatives are not to be *tampered with;* studying them might reveal needed changes or concessions. Likewise the motives and private attitudes of top executives are sacrosanct. . . .
>
> . . . The emphasis of what we are calling industrial psychology as social science is on the broad, long-run, socially significant problems. . . . For example, what are the strains and the long-run effects which specialized machine processes and assembly lines impose on factory workers? . . . What are the possibilities and the limitations of democratic social participation within industrial units whose structure remains essentially autocratic? What changes in the government of industry are necessary in order to develop working

> relationships that are humanly satisfying as well as productive? Do men in top positions of power in industry genuinely believe in democratic participation by working people? (48, p. 225)

A few pioneering social scientists are beginning to meet Kornhauser's challenge. In recent years several significant studies have been undertaken which have dealt with such problems as authority, control, superior-subordinate relationships, and employee participation within an industrial organization. Outstanding examples of these studies are those of the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan and the Tavistock Institute in London. Both of these groups have been eminently successful in establishing such relationships with industrial organizations that the researchers can deal with some of these more fundamental human relations problems. Both groups have made an effort to avoid being "used" by management for its own ends, although this aspect of the relationship is clearly dependent upon both the maturity and the security of management. Jacobson, Kahn, Mann, and Morse of the Survey Research Center point this up:

> If an organization has little understanding of the research process and of the value of establishing research principles, it is likely that the leaders of the organization will perceive as relevant to their interest only the research findings which tie directly into their immediate problems. On the other hand, an organization whose leadership is more mature with respect to the processes of research will participate in a broader, more theoretically-oriented kind of research, which may hold more promise for long-range administrative decisions than for day-to-day problem-solving. (40, p. 65)

It would appear, then, that real limitations still confront the research worker, despite the recent progress made in conducting long-range research in human relations in industrial organizations.

EDUCATION IN NEED OF NEW LEADERSHIP PATTERNS

In the field of education, dissatisfaction with traditional concepts of leadership is becoming increasingly prevalent. Manifestations of education's concern for the problem of leadership can be seen in controversies about the proper role of the teacher, conceived as a leader; in the growing interest of school administrators in newer concepts of administration; and in the field of adult education where the extensive use of group discussion is creating a demand for a new type of leader and of leadership in discussion.

One of the most significant developments in education within recent years has been the re-conceptualization of the role of the teacher as a group leader. This new way of defining the role of the teacher brings with it a concern for the influence of the classroom "leader" upon the social climate of the group, and of course an interest in the effect of different kinds of social or emotional climates upon the learning behavior of the students. The classic and pioneering experiments of Lewin, Lippitt, and White at the University of Iowa (50) serve as an example of this new development in education. Their studies demonstrated that it was possible to investigate by controlled experimental methods different patterns of leadership, the different group climates created by these patterns of leadership, and the subsequent effects of these climates upon the behavior of the children who were members of these groups. These early studies have stimulated a host of educators and psychologists to conduct further investigations of this important dimension of classroom teaching. Withall (95), for example, demonstrated that the social and emotional relationship between teachers and their students influences the students' learning behavior in the classroom. Flanders (25) showed that directive, demanding, and teacher-supporting behavior of teachers elicited student behaviors of hostility toward self or teacher, withdrawal, apathy, aggressiveness, and even emotional disintegration; whereas acceptant, student-supporting, and less directive behavior on the part of teachers elicited integrative behavior and decreased anxiety on the part of students.

These studies are cited only to illustrate the recent concern in education about patterns of leadership in the classroom. No longer can education afford to deal only with teachers' competency in transmitting information, for we now have ample evidence of the importance of their *leadership* role as it affects the psychological climate in which the learning process takes place in the classroom. Consequently, education today is searching for new patterns of leadership and for effective methods of training teachers in new leadership skills. Traditional methods of teaching are being found wanting, yet there is considerable controversy as to what should take their place. There is both dissatisfaction with and misunderstanding of the role of the teacher as it has developed from theories of "progressive education," but teachers are reluctant to return to the more traditional patterns of classroom leadership, in which the teacher must dominate, direct, and control the learning activities of the students.

Not only is leadership of real concern for the teacher, but it has become a problem of significance for the administrator in educational institutions. Educational leaders are beginning to recognize that the administration and management of educational institutions require new skills in dealing with human factors. The human relations between administrators and teachers, between teachers and students, and between teachers and parents have assumed increased importance in educational administration. Benne and Muntyan illustrate this point in connection with the problem of curriculum change:

> Few, if any, of those who are closely associated with the conduct of the schools today are satisfied with the school program as it is now operating. . . . It is virtually impossible for anyone with educational responsibility to avoid strong pressure, indeed many and conflicting pressures, to initiate, to induce, changes in the curriculum of the school. During the past several decades, under these pressures, widespread programs of curriculum revision and curriculum development have been launched in local communities and in states throughout the nation. Undoubtedly, these efforts have resulted in some lasting changes, some improvements, in the school program. But few are satisfied with the extent or the quality of the changes which have resulted from these heroic efforts. (10, p. 2)

These writers attempt to analyze the causes of the failures or partial successes of efforts to effect curriculum changes, and they conclude:

> It is our further contention that, however else the problem of curriculum change may have been formulated, it has not been generally seen as a problem of changing the human relationship structure of the school seen and analyzed as a social system. (10, p. 3)

This assessment of the problem of curriculum change emphasizes the importance of viewing the administrator as a person who must be skilled in dealing with human relations. It implies a dissatisfaction with traditional concepts of leadership which have neglected the human aspects of change. We have forgotten that curriculum change requires of the people who manage school programs that their leadership facilitate a change in *people*, not simply a change in the "content" of the curriculum.

That branch of the field of education which has come to be known as "adult education" has been responsible for highlighting the importance of leadership in learning situations. Some of the reasons for this are quite clear. In adult education programs the teacher ordinarily cannot rely upon the usual educational devices for motivating students to learn. Grades, for example, are not usually important to students in adult education programs, nor are course credits and degrees. Consequently the teacher who is accustomed to using the traditional symbols of reward and punishment with children soon discovers he cannot rely upon such devices for increasing the adult's motivation to learn. Similarly, the adult education instructor cannot usually enforce compulsory attendance or count on his students to carry out reading assignments. In short, the fact that the adult educator does not have a captive audience is one important reason why he has had to try out new methods of classroom leadership — methods which involve the learner in self-motivated activity. It is understandable why in adult education programs group discussion methods have been used so extensively instead of lectures and recitations.

Adult educators, therefore, are searching for something new in the way of a pattern of leadership appropriate to the requirements of this new classroom situation. But though there is much searching, as yet it appears that many have not found exactly what they are looking for. Instead, in most adult education programs we see some strange hybrid combinations of supposedly "free" discussions dominated and subtly manipulated by the leader. The traditional notion of the leader as the one best qualified to decide what the group should learn and how the group should go about learning it stubbornly persists as the dominant philosophy of most adult education programs. Nevertheless, many adult educators remain dissatisfied, for they have not discovered a real substitute for the strongly entrenched traditional role of the classroom leader. Instead they have tried only to adapt and modify the traditional teacher's role to the new discussion group medium, hoping that this would be sufficient to meet the unique demands of the adult learning situation.

THE EMERGENCE OF LEADERSHIP AS A SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

Paralleling the phenomenon of leadership as a problem of growing concern for society is its recent emergence as a problem worthy of study by the social scientists. Although leadership has always been a topic of interest to novelists, biographers, historians, and political scientists, only recently has it earned respectability as a legitimate problem for the more experimentally oriented social scientists, such as the psychologists and the sociologists. Psychologists, particularly, now that they are less concerned about being accepted as true scientists by the older disciplines, recently have been accepting the challenge of this socially significant problem. Even though ready-made theories and precise methods of objective measurement are not immediately available, social scientists already have produced a large body of scientific literature dealing with experiments and field studies aimed at understanding leadership. Some of their findings already have had an impact on society, especially in industry and education. Though only a mere beginning, recent studies of leadership represent a significant advance over the kind of armchair philosophizing that characterized much of the earlier thinking about leadership. Social science has come a long way since leadership was thought of as a "right" or a privilege to be exercised only by those born into the favored class or caste.

The range of specific problems studied within the area of leadership is great, and the methods used to investigate such problems are varied. Although it is not our intention here to review systematically all of the scientific studies on leadership, a brief description of the various types of studies may help the reader acquire a general understanding of how leadership currently is being investigated by social scientists.

STUDIES OF THE AUTHORITARIAN LEADER

A number of investigators have made a major contribution to a scientific understanding of leadership by focusing their attention on prominent leaders who have demonstrated extreme authoritarian, fascistic, or dictatorial leadership behavior. These studies have thrown light on the personality dynamics of power-seekers, as for example the studies by Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1) of the "authoritarian personality," the studies by Lowenthal and Guterman (52) of the fascist agitator, and the analysis by Erich Fromm of the authoritarian character structure of the German sado-masochistic personality (29). Other studies in this group have sought to discover the roots of authoritarianism in certain social and cultural phenomena existing in various degrees within different societies. These studies have provided valuable insights into why groups are more or less susceptible to the appeals of powerful dictators. An example is Erich Fromm's notion that the increasing sense of powerlessness and isolation felt by the common man predisposes him to seek a strong leader upon whom he can be dependent. Perhaps even more significant is the evidence from these studies of the close relationship between those who wish to be dominated and those who dominate. Adorno states these findings as follows:

> Comparison of the results of the two studies supports the theoretical hypothesis that a close affinity exists between the meaning of fascist politico-psychological devices and the characterological and ideological structure of those at whom the propaganda aims. The fascist agitator is, after all, likely to be also a fascist character. . . . The agitator's overall technique of ceaselessly repeating rigid formulas chimes in with the fascist character's compulsive leaning toward stereotypical, rigid thinking. For the fascist character as well as his prospective leader the individual is a mere specimen of its kind. (1, p. 426)

Thus, according to this investigator, both the dictator and those who will be dictated to are cast from the same mold. Both feel a sense of inner weakness, both devaluate the individual, both need to dominate and at the same time to submit to domination.

While this group of studies has enriched our store of hypotheses about leadership and followership, social science must now extend its studies so as to include an examination of those leaders who are not so "deviant." Most of us as leaders would not classify ourselves as Hitlers, yet our leadership can be examined in terms of some of the same dimensions that have been found fruitful for understanding the more "pathological" type of leader.

Studies of the Emergent or Natural Leader

Another type of study is that which deals primarily with problems of emergent leadership in informal or natural groups. A number of studies are characterized by their focus on how and why particular people emerge as leaders in an informal or unstructured, as opposed to an organized or structured, group. Most of these studies have used groups in which the members themselves determine who is to become a leader, as in juvenile gangs, street corner groups, custodial and correctional institutions, children's play groups, and experimentally created laboratory "leaderless" groups.

Some of these studies have been concerned with identifying the personality traits of the emergent leaders; others, with identifying some of the behavioral attributes of natural leaders, as for example the quantity or quality of the verbal behavior of the person who emerges as the group's leader. The methods employed in these studies range from direct observation of the group under natural conditions, as in a study of juvenile groups, to controlled and systematic recording of group behavior under laboratory conditions, as in a study of the number and kinds of verbal interactions initiated by members of a group that has been given an artificial problem to solve.

These studies have been influential in emphasizing the situational aspects of leadership, and thus have contributed to the depopularization of previous "trait" theories or "great man" theories of leadership. Nevertheless, they have certain limitations which stem from the nature of the groups selected for study, inasmuch as most significant groups in our society *do* have formal leaders and some degree of formal structure. If therefore, we were to rely exclusively on theories of leadership based upon studies of informal and leaderless groups, it is likely we would not have the principles to explain all the phenomena of group behavior in groups which already have formal leaders.

Studies of Formal Leaders in Bureaucratic Organizations

Still another type of study is that which focuses on the characteristics of persons who have risen to positions of formal leadership in such organizations as the industrial concern, the army, the government bureau, and so on. To a great extent, studies of this type have been initiated in an attempt to identify common traits or characteristics which then can be used as a basis for selecting likely candidates for top positions in such organizations. The task of the investigator has been to discover what makes a good business executive, say, and then to devise objective methods of measuring the degree to which different aspirants possess the traits found associated with executive leadership. The principal limitation of such studies is that they are not likely to give us ideas about new forms of leadership, though they may increase our understanding of the kind of leadership that already exists in essentially authoritarian organizations. In other words, studies aimed at the selection and training of leaders for positions in essentially authoritarian organizations may tell us what it takes for a person to fit into an existing social structure, but we are left without much understanding of what might happen to the existing social structure of an authoritarian organization should a *new* pattern of leadership be introduced. Psychologists, particularly, have concentrated upon fitting the leader to the organization and have seldom been inclined to devise experiments to determine the effects upon the existing organization of newer approaches to leadership.

Despite this limitation of many of the studies of leadership in bureaucratic organizations, some have made significant contributions to a scientific understanding of leadership. Recent studies have demonstrated how important it is to consider the cultural or environmental factors in studying leadership; they have emphasized the significance of status and prestige in relation to leadership behavior; they have devised methods of assessing the attitudes of subordinates toward their leaders and relating these to the leader's self-assessment; they have demonstrated significant relationships between supervision, morale, and productivity; and finally they have introduced useful new concepts and devised reliable scientific methods which undoubtedly will push ahead the frontiers of knowledge about organizational leadership. In subsequent chapters reference will be made to the principal findings of many of these recent studies.

Experiments in Leadership Training

During the last decade an increasing number of social scientists have become concerned with the training of leaders. Leadership training programs have sprung up in many sections of the country, offering training opportunities for teachers, school administrators, community leaders, business and industrial executives, ministers, military officers, nurses, social workers, adult educators, and others. The origin of many of these programs can be traced back to a group of social scientists who were stimulated by the theories of the psychologist, Kurt Lewin, and who later became interested in the implications of his theories for understanding leadership and group behavior. These programs also have roots in the progressive education movement and its emphasis on the freedom of the student and on education as a preparation for living in a democratic society.

In recent years the training efforts of these social scientists have come to be known as the "group dynamics" movement, and their training program, the National Training Laboratory for Group Development, has acquired a national reputation in its eight years of existence. Several regional training programs associated with the National Training Laboratory have been started in Chicago, California, Denver, and at the University of Illinois. The social scientists responsible for these training programs are feeding so much into the stream of knowledge about groups and leadership that the student of this field should not overlook their writings.

Many of the important ideas of the group dynamicists have been incorporated into the training programs which a growing number of organizations are conducting for their supervisors and administrators. Hundreds of organizations are carrying out formal training programs, administered either by their own personnel or by consultants hired for this purpose. Some of these programs have severe limitations in that they tend to oversimplify the problems of supervisory leadership through concentrating on "techniques," without sufficiently considering such important factors as the supervisor's attitudes and the basic leadership philosophy of top management. Nevertheless, many organizations have already embarked upon ambitious programs of leadership training, and their need for help from social scientists is an urgent one.

Divergent Directions in the Search for New Leadership Patterns

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If, as we have suggested in the previous chapter, society is searching for new leadership patterns, then we need to examine some of the possible avenues or pathways down which this search might be directed. Though it is somewhat risky to try to predict these directions, it may be possible to discern certain very broad and general avenues of search, admitting to uncertainty about the more specific features of future investigations into the problem of leadership. This we shall attempt in this chapter, because of a belief that there are two very divergent approaches to the discovery of new leadership patterns — divergent because each one starts with a different philosophy about the nature of man.

The philosopher, John Dewey, once wrote:

> Every social and political philosophy currently professed will be found upon examination to involve a certain view about the constitution of human nature; in itself and in its relation to physical nature. (20, p. 13)

So it is with every conception of leadership — each contains, either implicitly or explicitly, some assumptions about the nature of man. How we choose to conceptualize leadership in human groups will depend partly on how we view the human organism. Leadership stands for a particular kind of interpersonal relationship between human beings, and we must have some definite ideas about both parties to the relationship — the "follower" as well as the leader. The thesis here is that one's basic philosophy about man as a *follower* determines in part one's view of man as a *leader*.

This obviously implies that we have a choice with regard to how we view man — a thesis which history seems to confirm, for there is evidence that in the past society has always contained conflicting philosophies about human nature. Sometimes human nature is exalted, sometimes it is depreciated. Society can at times be quite optimistic and positive about the nature of man; at other times, rather pessimistic and negative. The fact that both views have existed for so long suggests that it has not been possible to prove the validity of either. Apparently there is abundant evidence on both sides. The conflicting ways of thinking about the nature of man are assumptions or sets of beliefs, and every person individually chooses between them. Thus, though not readily testable, each set of beliefs nevertheless serves as a frame of reference or blueprint for one's attitudes toward leadership. To follow one blueprint is to construct a certain kind of edifice in which to house the concept of leadership; to follow the other is to build a radically different structure. The task here is to point out the conflict rather than attempt to prove the soundness of either of the opposing philosophies.

CONFLICTING VIEWS OF THE NATURE OF MAN

There are many different ways of describing the conflict, but we shall picture it as a conflict between a positive, optimistic, or encouraging view of man on the one hand, and a negative, pessimistic, or discouraging view on the other. Manifestations of the conflict can be found in many areas of social thought and action — in biology, psychology, psychotherapy, religion, political philosophy. This disagreement also can be recognized in conflicting theories of industrial management, in opposing theories of industrial consulting practice, in different theories of education, in divergent approaches to community rehabilitation, in differing theories of regional or national planning. Wherever there is the possibility of a *leader-follower* relationship, the disagreement about the nature of man seems to emerge. It is more than an academic controversy to be carried on solely at an intellectual level of discourse; it is at the very root of all human and social relationships. We need now to examine some of the areas in which the controversy is manifested in order to see more clearly the outlines of each philosophy.

Although we have chosen to express the conflict about the nature of man as one between *two* philosophies, we recognize that there are other philosophies, some of which contain certain elements of both of the extreme views identified here. In a very real sense, it is for purposes of exposition and emphasis that we have dichotomized the philosophies about the nature of man. Actually we have constructed what some social scientists call "ideal types." They probably do not exist in such pure form — that is, few people would claim either of these extreme and oversimplified positions as their own. Nevertheless, by constructing these "ideal types" and contrasting them with each other, we hope to emphasize the close relationship between the way people think about leadership and the way they feel about their fellow men — or simply man in general.

Competitive Man or Cooperative Man?

Is man naturally competitive or is he motivated by strong drives for cooperation? This is the way the basic conflict has often been expressed in the history of biological thought. Influenced by the original theories of Darwin which emphasized animals' competitive "struggle for existence," some biologists accepted the philosophy that man is in constant conflict with man. Nature was used to provide a biological explanation for man's competitiveness. Darwin's theory of the "survival of the fittest" thus has often been interpreted as adequate justification for a philosophy in which the individual is seen as motivated to defend his position in a hostile environment in competition with others of his species or with different species.

The influence of Darwinian thinking extended into economic philosophies, too. The idea of "rugged individualism" in a capitalistic economy became a central core of certain economic theories, partly because of the acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution. Consequently, in the economic sphere man's competitiveness and his exploitation of his fellow men have often been justified on the grounds that nature requires such behavior of man, if he is to survive in the hostile, competitive world.

There is evidence, however, that man by nature is not necessarily competitive. In a small but significant book, Ashley Montagu has assembled a collection of findings from experiments in biology, anthropology, and psychology which support the idea that man is basically cooperative. Montagu develops the thesis that cooperation is the principle governing the relations of all organisms and that this principle has an organic basis in the reproductive relationship, with its accompanying mutual interrelations maintained between parent and offspring. In contrast to Darwinian theory, Montagu concludes that natural selection actually favors cooperative struggle for survival:

> . . . evolution itself is a process which favors cooperating rather than disoperating groups, and "fitness" is a function of the group as a whole rather than of separate individuals. The fitness of the individual is largely derived from his membership in a group. (62, p. 45)

Montagu calls attention to the experimental work of Allee, who has studied cooperative behavior of simple forms of plants and animals. Allee's studies provide rather convincing evidence of a higher survival rate for animals living *together* than for those living *in isolation.* This point of view is summarized in the following quotation from one of Allee's publications:

> After much consideration, it is my mature conclusion, contrary to Herbert Spencer, that the cooperative forces are biologically the more important and vital. The balance between the cooperative and altruistic tendencies and those which are disoperative and egoistic is relatively close. Under many conditions the cooperative forces lose. In the long run, however, the group-centered, more altruistic drives are slightly stronger. . . . Despite many known appearances to the contrary, human altruistic drives are as firmly based on an animal ancestry as is man himself. Our tendencies toward goodness, such as they are, are as innate as our tendencies toward intelligence; we could do well with more of both. (62, p. 51)

Thus, the "cooperative and altruistic tendencies" of the individual may be biologically the more important. While recognizing the existence of competitive tendencies, Allee feels that in the long run the more group-centered drives of man — his tendencies toward cooperative relationships — are the stronger.

These two positions with regard to the nature of man's basic drives illustrate in the biological field the conflict about the nature of man. One theory emphasizes man's competitive tendencies; the other, his more group-centered tendencies. From the one point of view, it would seem that man as a social being could not be trusted very far; from the other point of view, he could more easily be trusted.

Man the Victim or the Creator of His Environment?

In the field of psychology, two divergent views of the nature of man can be seen in the behavioristic and mechanistic theories as opposed to the more dynamic and holistic theories. In the most extreme mechanistic position, the individual, pictured as a machine-like collection of reflexes and habits, is alleged to be activated by external stimuli which set off behavioral responses usually predictable from past experience or previous conditioning. The organism acts because it is stimulated. The individual is thus a passive receptor of different environmental pressures or stimuli — a lump of clay that is molded by whatever forces we can bring to bear on it.

One of the chief proponents of this mechanistic conception of man — in fact, the psychologist who is usually accepted as the founder of the behaviorist school of thought, J. B. Watson — claimed that if he were given a child at an early enough age he could mold him into almost any kind of adult imaginable. Although few psychologists today would accept such an extreme view, much of psychological thinking has been influenced by the behavioristic theory. Society as a whole has felt this influence most directly in the area of child-rearing, for behaviorism in psychology gave impetus to the popular theory of child-rearing in which it was considered all-important to hold to rigid schedules of feeding, sleeping, and training. Only within the last decade or two have psychologists begun to reject this oversimplified and highly mechanical conception of child-rearing.

Even today, however, there exists another body of theory in which a mechanistic view of man predominates. One of the first protests against the behavioristic model of man was made by Freud. From his theories there emerged a somewhat different idea about the personality of the individual. Freud's model of man, however, was as behavioristic as the models of the behaviorists, though in another way. Instead of employing the analogy of a machine to explain the nature of the individual, Freud and those who followed his psychoanalytic theories used the analogy of a hydraulic system. Man according to this view is motivated to behavior by internal pressures seeking external expression. Although the hydraulic-system model permitted a much more dynamic theory of human behavior than the machine model, it still involved the same notion of the individual as the passive victim of forces, in this case internal forces. Moreover, the psychoanalytic theories continually stressed that these internal forces are primarily destructive and hostile, that if allowed to remain unchecked they will find expression in anti-social behavior.

There are psychologists today, however, who reject these disparaging conceptions of man. They call for a new point of view in which the individual is seen as exhibiting a great deal more self-determination and purposeful behavior. Prescott Lecky, one of those who reject the older models, feels that psychology must throw off the burden of the over-simplified mechanistic explanation of human behavior:

> The usual enunciation is that the organism acts because it is stimulated. We assume, on the contrary, that every organism, as long as it remains alive, is continuously active, hence continuously purposive. Life and activity are coexistent and inseparable. We do not have to explain why the organism acts, but only why it acts in one way rather than another. A stimulus does not initiate activity, but merely tends to modify in one or another way the activity already in progress. . . . One source of motivation only, the necessity to maintain the unity of the system, must serve as the universal dynamic principle. Not conflict but unity must be the fundamental postulate. (49, pp. 80–81)

In this passage Lecky is rejecting the behavioristic explanation that man acts only as a result of some stimulus. To Lecky, man seems forever in the process of acting, and his behavior has definite purpose which, Lecky claims, is maintaining the unity of the organism. Thus behavior has a meaning, a purpose, a direction. The individual must "*define for himself* the nature of that totality which he is." Man is not merely the passive receptor of stimuli from an ever-changing and potent environment; he is in a sense an active determiner of his own destiny. Man picks and chooses which aspects of his environment he wishes to react against, for man is continuously seeking ways to realize his own nature. How different from earlier philosophies is this conception of the individual. To Lecky, life is the unfolding of the potentialities of the organism:

> The first necessity for a scientific psychology is the conviction that behavior is meaningful and that each life story has its separate and characteristic plot. To discover that plot is to understand the organism's behavior, and to see in its adjustment to the environing world the dramatic unfolding of its own purposive achievement. (49, p. 116)

This point of view has also been championed by some of the biological scientists. For example, Goldstein, basing his conclusions on extensive studies of human pathology, has emphasized that the "self-preservation" drive is really a pathological phenomenon rather than a normal one. It is the tendency of the *sick* individual to *preserve* his capacities. The *healthy* organism, on the other hand, is governed by the tendency to *actualize or enhance the self*; it is driven by an urge to perfection, a tendency to realize its nature. For Goldstein, there is only one organic drive:

> Normal behavior corresponds to a continual change of tension, of such kind that over and over again that state of tension is reached which enables and impels the organism to actualize itself in further activities, according to its nature. (32, p. 197)

This interpretation of man stresses his positive drive toward actualization of the self rather than the drive for mere preservation of the self in the Darwinian sense. According to Goldstein, the organism is continuously seeking ways of becoming a better organism through the actualization of its own organic capacities. This urge to perfection is quite closely related to Allee's "tendencies toward goodness," and both interpretations contain the element of belief in the constructive and forward-moving direction of organic growth.

Again we see clearly two concepts of the individual which in their pure forms put him at one or the other extreme ends of a continuum of potentialities for self-determination, self-realization, or self-actualization. In psychological thought, both concepts have had their usefulness, both have led to significant experimentation, both have attracted many adherents. And, what is more important, both exist today to exert their distinctive influence on how we approach the study of man in his relationship with other men.

THE SINFULNESS OF MAN OR THE GOODNESS OF MAN?

Religious philosophers have been engaged in a controversy for centuries — some affirming the essential goodness of man, others strongly supporting a doctrine of the sinfulness of man. One need not be a theologian to grasp the significance, in terms of religious teaching and practice, of this fundamental difference with regard to the nature of man.

Some religious authorities have chosen to dwell on man's sinfulness and weakness. Relying primarily on painstaking and scholarly study of the Bible or on their insightful, yet unsystematic and unscientific, observations of man in society, these philosophers have attempted to build a strong logical case for the sinfulness of man. Others, relying on the very same sources, seem to come out with a contrary view of man. It is unnecessary to enter into this complex controversy for the purpose of ascertaining which point of view is better documented or which is the more logical and rational. As a matter of fact, one can find evidence for both points of view in all documents that record man's behavior, present and past. Of greater significance than the correctness of each position is the effect that these philosophies have had upon human relationships in our society.

The doctrine of sin is somewhat more understandable when we realize that philosophers use the doctrine as a philosophical tool with which to combat inequalities and restrictions on freedom in our modern capitalistic society. Nevertheless, the practical implications of the doctrine have been interpreted by laymen. One implication has been pointed out by Roberts:

> The helplessness to which the doctrine of sin calls attention has far too often been conceived in such a way that the doctrine condemns, as an effort on man's part to save himself, what is really indispensable to man's "being himself." Despite its acceptance of

> the goodness of creation, Christian theology has frequently allowed the doctrine of sin virtually to obliterate the first affirmation. The result is that one scolds himself, not merely for ego-centricity, but for being a self; he condemns not merely sexual excess, but sexuality itself; he feels guilty, not merely for grasping at power unduly, but for asserting and maintaining his own existence at all. (74, p. 91)

Roberts is apparently stressing how the layman has internalized the doctrine of sin and how this makes him deny and repress his own individuality. Thus, though it may be a brilliant and logical philosophical construction for scholars like Calvin, Neibuhr, Horton, and others, the doctrine of sin as interpreted by the ordinary individual with little understanding of the intricate semantics of abstract philosophical theses, becomes a doctrine of the denial of the goodness and uniqueness of the self.

Erich Fromm has attacked the doctrine of sin preached by Luther and Calvin. His interpretation of Luther's concept of man is contained in the following quotation:

> Luther assumed the existence of an innate evilness in man's nature, which directs his will for evil and makes it impossible for any man to perform any good deed on the basis of his nature. . . . The conviction of man's rottenness and powerlessness to do anything good on his own merits is one essential condition of God's good. Only if man humiliates himself and demolishes his individual will and pride will God's grace descend upon him. (29, pp. 74–75)

The implication of Luther's doctrine for the society to which he preached, in the opinion of Fromm, was a submission of the individual to another kind of authority:

> Thus, while Luther freed people from the authority of the church, he made them submit to a much more tyrannical authority, that of a God who insisted on complete submission of man and annihilation of the individual self as the essential condition to his salvation. *Luther's "faith" was the conviction of being loved upon the condition of surrender*, a solution which has much in common with the principle of complete submission of the individual to the state and the "leader." (29, p. 81)

Thus, the significance of a theology that emphasizes the sin of man or the "finiteness of the individual" in relation to some supreme authority, to use Niebuhr's terminology, is to be found in the kind of human relationships which it fosters — relationships that make men dependent on external authority.

Contrast the concept of man that is implied in the doctrine of Roberts, a doctrine that clearly stresses the more positive tendencies in man's nature:

> He [man] has the power to bind past, present, and future together in a stable, organizing center of on-going experience; the power to use the "shorthand" of conceptual thought . . . the power to distinguish between beautiful and ugly, true and false, good and bad; the power to organize communities in accordance with meanings, so that individuals act in concert through symbols and ideas instead of being at the mercy of instinct; the power to be both actor and spectator in relation to his own existence. (74, p. 89)

Here is a philosophy that recognizes man's individual powers of thought, his purposeful activity, his ability to distinguish between good and bad. Tennant is another scholar who has offered the suggestion that in religious doctrines it is quite logical to postulate a "doctrine of goodness":

> A "bias toward evil" has been ascribed to the nascent will in order to assign cause for its alliance with appetite and desire. But inasmuch as the human will does not always and from the first rush to league itself with the animal cravings and desires, it would seem necessary, in all fairness, to postulate an opposite "bias toward good" to account for the cases in which the will does not consent to the gratification of impulse or in which it exerts control over appetite. (91, p. 142)

This brief summary should suffice to illustrate how the conflicting views of the nature of man find expression as a controversy in religious and philosophical doctrines. Those who hold to the basic sinfulness of man's nature would argue the need for man to recognize that the locus of authority resides outside himself; those who believe in man's basic goodness see him as capable of developing into his own authority. One point of view in a very real sense asks man to deny his individuality; the other encourages him to accept it and glory in it.

MAN IN NEED OF GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION OR MAN CAPABLE OF SELF-DIRECTION?

One of the most recent battlegrounds for the controversy about man's nature is in the area of mental hygiene — psychotherapy, adjustment counseling, and the treatment of mental and emotional problems. It is here, as we shall see, that the conflict is perhaps most sharply defined, in part because the opposing views are directly reflected in the different methods used by therapists representing these divergent philosophies about the individual.

From one approach to treating the emotional problems of the individual, it can be inferred that the therapist has little faith in the capacities and potentialities of his patient or client. This is the approach, quite prevalent in our society, in which the counselor or therapist, by virtue of his superior knowledge and training, takes upon himself almost complete responsibility for the process of treatment — diagnosing the patient's problems, analyzing the complex causes of these problems, and advising what the patient should do to solve them. Though highly simplified here, this general conception of helping the emotionally disturbed individual is one that has been held by many psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, ministers, school advisers, and parents. The underlying assumptions of this approach in handling problems of adjustment are that the individual has little understanding of himself, that he is incapable of grasping the "complex" psychological dynamics of his present disturbance, and that he is unlikely to discover for himself more constructive or healthier ways of behaving. In short, the individual is in such a state of helplessness that he needs the wisdom and analytical knowledge of the counselor or therapist. Responsibility for understanding and solving the problem lies not with the patient, but essentially with the "expert" to whom the patient has come for help. The individual is thus seen as one needing to be advised, told, persuaded, influenced, guided, directed, inspired, taught, or preached to. A disparaging concept of the nature of man seems to stand out clearly in these traditional ways of helping the individual who is emotionally disturbed.

There are other approaches to therapy from which it may be inferred that the therapist, at least in theory, wants the patient himself to work out his own solutions. In the writings of modern psychoanalysts, for example, we find it frequently stated that the goal of therapy is the patient's own achievement of independence and self-understanding, that insights must be assimilated by the patient himself, and that the ego of the patient must be strengthened. In actual practice, however, many psychoanalysts demonstrate only a *limited* trust in the capacities of the patient for self-direction and psychological growth. For example, it is commonly accepted analytic practice for the therapist to manipulate aspects of the patient's environment, to control and judiciously vary the relationship between patient and therapist, to encourage the patient's initial dependence upon the therapist, and to put forth or withhold interpretations at his discretion. It is really the therapist who retains the major responsibility for the treatment, not the patient.

In short, it appears that, even in the more individual-oriented analytic therapies, the therapist is often operating on the basis of a concept that places only a very limited and restricted faith in man's constructive forces and his potentialities for self-direction and psychological growth. Rogers has called our attention to this limited kind of confidence in the patient:

> There has, of course, been lip-service paid to the strength of the client and the need of utilizing the urge toward independence which exists in the client. Psychiatrists, analysts, and especially social case workers have stressed this point. Yet, it is clear from the case material cited, that this confidence is a very limited confidence. It is a confidence that the client can take over, if guided by the expert, a confidence that the client can assimilate insight, if it is first given to him by the expert, can make choices if guidance is given at crucial points. It is, in short, the same sort of attitude which the mother has toward the adolescent, that she believes in his capacity to make his own decisions and guide his own life, providing he takes the directions of which she approves. (78, p. 418)

In the last ten years, however, a new approach to psychotherapy has emerged in which the therapist actually practices a much more complete and consistent belief in the capacity of the individual. This approach, which has been called "nondirective" or "client-centered" counseling, has insistently raised provoking questions in regard to the philosophical orientation of different therapists and counselors. Do we tend to treat individuals as persons of worth, or do we subtly devaluate them by our methods of helping them? Do we respect the client's right to self-direction, or do we basically believe that his life would be lived best if guided by us? To what extent do we as therapists have a need to direct and dominate others? Are we willing to have the individual choose his own values, or are our actions guided by the conviction that he would be happiest if he permitted us to select for him his values and goals?

In an attempt to communicate the client-centered therapist's attitudes, Rogers has written:

> For the present, it would appear to me, as counselor, to focus my whole attention and effort upon understanding and perceiving as the client perceives and understands is a striking operational demonstration of the belief I have in the worth and the significance of this individual client. Clearly the most important value which I hold is, as indicated by my attitudes and verbal behavior, the client himself. Also the fact that I permit the outcome to rest upon this deep understanding is probably the most vital operational evidence which could be given that I have confidence in the potentiality of the individual for constructive change and development in the direction of a more full and satisfying life. As a seriously disturbed client wrestles with his utter inability to make any choice, or another client struggles with his strong urges to commit suicide, the fact that I enter with deep understanding into the desperate feelings that exist but do not attempt to take over responsibility, is a most meaningful expression of basic confidence in the forward-moving tendencies in the human organism. (76, pp. 35–36)

Rogers expresses here the firm conviction that the emotionally disturbed individual *is* capable of assuming responsibility for his own psychological reeducation, that he can, without the interference of the therapist, become self-directing. To place such complete responsibility in the individual is an affirmation of a deep faith in the potentialities of the organism for self-actualization and self-enhancement.

This kind of trust in the individual is not limited to the area of treatment of mental and emotional disturbances. In the field of physical health there is emerging the faint glimmering of a point of view which recognizes the importance of placing much more responsibility upon the patient for improving and maintaining his physical health. While the traditional approach in practicing medicine has been one in which the physician, as the recognized "expert," conducts the examination, makes his diagnosis, and finally prescribes the specific treatment for the patient, a few physicians are becoming skeptical of such an approach. Out of the Peckham Experiment in London, an experiment in promoting health in a total community, has come evidence of the effectiveness of a new kind of relationship between the medical expert and the patient — a relationship in which the physician proceeds on the basis of a stronger faith in the capacity of the individual than is usual in traditional medicine. In discussing their methods of handling the health examination, the Peckham experimenters have this to say:

> *No advice is volunteered.* To the layman this may appear but natural, since no advice is sought; but to anyone trained in the medical profession — that is, specifically to give advice — it is a most difficult attitude to achieve. Indeed to give advice seems to be a well nigh irresistible impulse to most human beings in a situation of authority. . . . It was found in practice that when the examinations were conducted in a spirit which led up to conclusions which were bits of advice, often no action was taken; whereas by leaving it to spontaneity in the individual and to his own sense of responsibility, action is taken in the overwhelming majority of cases. This very action represents the exercise of a faculty that has been largely in abeyance. With exercise of a faculty, health develops. The faculty of responsibility is no exception to this rule. (67, pp. 49–50)

The phrase, "leaving it to spontaneity in the individual and to his own sense of responsibility," sounds very much like some of the statements of the nondirective therapists. The Peckham experimenters seem to be discovering in their practice of medicine the validity of an approach to the individual that is based on a genuine respect for the positive and constructive forces within him.

It would appear, then, that different assumptions about the nature of man, different philosophies in regard to the potentialities of the human organism, lie behind present-day approaches to the handling of adjustment problems and to the practice of medicine. It seems that they add up to the very same disagreement that exists in other areas of human relations in our society.

MAN HAVING INTRINSIC VALUE OR MAN THE MEANS TO AN END?

There is another way of conceptualizing the conflict about the nature of man that has timely significance for each of us as a world citizen. How is the individual to be valued in relation to the society of which he is a member? What is the role of the individual citizen in a society in relation to the leaders of that society? What is the worth of each member of a group in relation to the worth of the total group?

A large proportion of the world population is at present committed to a philosophy that seems to hold that the individual should be subservient to the collective society. At least from our frame of reference, it appears that in this philosophy the individual is made out to be of less value than the state — "the state" frequently meaning those select few who possess certain political "authority." Such a theory seems to consider the individuals in the society as the raw material for social revolution and reform by members of the "doctrinal aristocracy." Man, in this scheme of things, is not capable of thinking for himself, but rather must leave it to the privileged leaders who, through the possession of more social consciousness and professional skills than the masses, are vested with the authority to command and the right to be obeyed. Such totalitarian leadership must of necessity be based on a concept that the common man has less worth and integrity than the state or the party.

Such an evaluation of man seems characteristic of the Communist dogma. Although the Communist *ideal* is held to be the achievement of social, economic, and political freedom for the individual, Communism has demonstrated that it

> is *directly* concerned not so much with man as with realizing Communistic society, which, by producing conditions for production commensurate with human dignity, will necessarily lead to this dignity being achieved. . . . Communism on its way toward human paradise may have dropped the human being before reaching its goal! (51, pp. 191–192)

This lack of worth of the individual which seems to be implicit in the Communist doctrine has been recognized also by political philosophers in countries other than our own. For example, Feuer, describing the collective settlements of Israel, sees an important difference between the social spirit underlying the Israel collectives and that of orthodox Marxian doctrine:

> The communal forms are, to a large extent, influenced by Marxian ideals. . . . Nevertheless, the communal forms have found the philosophy of Marxism wanting in those respects which involve the relations of men and their leaders within a community. . . . This emphasis upon individuality, *on the value and freedom of each person, this revolt against any tendency to treat persons as ciphers*, has led to an intermixture of the Marxian doctrine with a variety of other components. . . . Even in the earliest days of settlement, the Jews looked for some philosophy which would attach more importance to the creative role of the individual. (24, pp. 366–367)

Here is a recognition of the "creative role of the individual" within a society, and a rejection of a doctrine in which the individual is not valued for his own individuality. This is a subtle difference, but it is a crucial one. It is not difficult to find in Communist theory abundant references to such concepts as liberty, freedom, citizen participation, and so on. Yet underlying the theory is a concept of man that relegates the individual to a position of subservience to the State or the Party. In the writings of Stalin, leadership of the working class and of the masses in general is defined as

> the ability to convince the masses of the correctness of the Party's policy; the ability to put forward and to carry out such slogans as bring the masses to the Party position and help them to realize by their own experience the Party's policy; the ability to raise the masses to the Party's level of consciousness and thus secure the support of the masses and their readiness for the decisive struggle. (83, p. 382)

Statements such as this attest to the unique position of the Party in relation to the masses in Communist political theory.

So that we do not infer that this political doctrine is found only in "foreign countries," we must recognize that within our own country there are those who have a similar conception of the masses. Lowenthal and Guterman, in their penetrating analysis of the attitudes and techniques of some of the fascist agitators in this country, present convincing evidence that the agitator "intimates that he is intellectually and morally superior to his audience," and that though he claims to be "one of the plain folk, he is yet far above them." These writers interpret the fascist leader's claim of superiority over the masses in the following passage:

> By constantly apologizing for his abandonment of private life and his absorption in public life, the agitator suggests that there are special provinces and unusual responsibilities that are limited to the uniquely endowed. If one of the plain people, such as he, gains access to such privileges and burdens, then it must surely be because of his unusual talents. He has embarked on a difficult task for which he is specially qualified, and therefore his followers owe him gratitude, admiration and obedience. (53, p. 83)

The theme is a familiar one. It is that the leader possesses special traits that qualify him for a position "above" the plain people and at the same time justify his taking responsibility for his followers in matters which they are incompetent to handle themselves. These are some of the political attitudes that are deeply rooted in a philosophy in which the common man is not deemed of much worth and significance. As Elton Mayo points out, the "rabble hypothesis" invariably has as its corollary a belief in the "state absolute" with its *strong and powerful leaders ruling over the dependent and incompetent masses.*

DIVERGENT APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM OF LEADERSHIP

Each of the two fundamentally different philosophical positions about the nature of man leads to a different pathway down which we might travel in the search for new patterns of leadership. If a negative and disparaging view of man predominates, the general approach to the problem of leadership will be an attempt to discover new and better ways of enhancing the control of leaders over their followers. But if the more positive and hopeful philosophy were to prevail in our society, then we predict that the general approach would be an attempt to discover new and better ways of developing the potentials of *groups*, of freeing individuals to assume more responsibility and control over their destinies, and of providing the conditions whereby "followers" could learn to carry out the functions required for groups to operate effectively and maturely.

A prediction such as this is based on the assumption that an individual's values and attitudes with regard to the nature of his fellow men will affect his choices as to how he shall relate to them. It determines whether as a parent he strives to mold the lives of his children according to some pattern drawn from his own needs, or creates the conditions in which his children become free to actualize themselves on their own terms. It determines whether as a teacher he concentrates on influencing his students to reproduce accurately his own thinking and the thinking of particular "experts," or uses methods that allow students to develop their own capacities for critical thinking and encourages self-direction in the learning process. The philosophy an individual chooses to accept determines whether as an administrator in an industrial organization he makes decisions *for* subordinates, or strives to involve them in joint decision-making processes. It affects how he relates to groups who wish to use his special skills and knowledge — whether he as an "expert" tries to solve the problem *for* the group, or helps the group members utilize their own resources for solving problems. It determines whether as a counselor or therapist he uses his prestige as a means of influencing others to adopt goals and solutions selected by him, or helps others to develop confidence and faith to choose their own goals and to arrive at their own solutions to their life problems. Such is the significance of the basic conflict within our society today. Each of the two fundamental positions in regard to man — the one essentially positive, hopeful, and optimistic; the other negative, discouraging, and pessimistic — leads us down a different pathway in our relationships with other individuals.

The social scientist himself will be influenced by the particular philosophy of man that he chooses to embrace. His view of the basic nature of man will affect not only his own personal relationships but also how he conceptualizes leadership and how he attacks the problems of leadership as a scientist. Here again we predict two divergent approaches.

THE LEADER-CENTERED APPROACH

If man by nature needs strong leadership, if the great mass of people need a powerful state which through exercise of authority "imposes order on the rabble," it is logical for the social scientist to devote his efforts toward the training and development of a "leadership elite." This in turn will require using more scientific methods for the selection of potential leaders, for society should be much better off if it hand-picks its leaders. The fact that only a few individuals are able to rise above the masses as leaders immediately suggests the presence of certain leadership traits. The scientist's task will be to discover the nature of these traits and to develop ways of measuring them.

The disparaging view of man will also mean an approach to the leadership problem in which the social scientist attempts to discover and perfect methods by which the leader can more accurately diagnose and assess the needs, opinions, and attitudes of those whom he is to lead. Possessing accurate information of this kind, the leader should be in a much better position to decide what is best for his group. In an industrial organization, this would mean that if management should want to introduce a new wage system it would want to avail itself of the latest scientific methods of polling the opinions of the workers. Having collected and analyzed these data, with the most refined statistical procedures, management then could decide upon the system which best fitted the workers' opinions and attitudes — provided, of course, such a system suited the purposes of management. In a school, it would mean that curriculum builders would want to rely on careful studies of the habits, needs, and capacities of children of different ages in order that these children might be provided with the best possible curriculum, tailor-made "to fit the child." In a psychological clinic it would mean that the therapist would want to utilize the findings of a large number of diagnostic tests so that he would feel he knew a patient well enough to recommend treatment. In adult education, it would mean that the trainers or group leaders would want to spend considerable time in diagnosing what the problems were, how much understanding the group members had of the causes of their problems, how much skill they had in the problem areas, and how sensitive they were about opening up their problems in front of others. The leaders could then plan a "strategy" for the group, based on this careful diagnosis.

Finally, should the social scientist choose to believe that the common man by nature must have guidance and direction from leaders who are superior in wisdom, then inevitably he would devote his efforts to the perfecting of methods whereby leaders can readily influence others. Already science has made great strides in this direction, as illustrated by the effectiveness of advertising and salesmanship. Thus, if the few are to lead the many, it is certainly strategic for the few to improve their techniques of selling, persuasion, control, and suggestion. Influencing and persuading others is already such a commonly accepted part of the leader's task that it finds expression in the existence of special government agencies organized for this purpose. The extent to which leaders in many countries utilize mass media of communication to accomplish their own purposes is called to our attention by Doob (21), who points out just how many countries, including our own, have government agencies engaged in propaganda and informational activities. He also warns of the potential dangers inherent in this situation. Lowenthal and Guterman (52), through their analysis of fascist agitators, have illustrated some of the techniques of group persuasion that can be used by strong leaders. One need only go to the corner newsstand to purchase for a few cents a persuasive book on "how to win friends and *influence* people." It also appears that much of the present theory behind the "Voice of America" broadcasts contain the notion of persuading and influencing the people of foreign countries. Again, some of the past research in the area of group leadership seems guided by the aim of discovering how leaders can better influence the group.

In education, for example, it is all too clear where this kind of philosophy leads. Teachers would be taught the latest methods of persuasion and indoctrination. Research would be directed (as it often has been in the past) toward discovering more effective incentives to induce students to learn what the leaders have decided they should learn. We would continue to devote most of our energies toward improving the various techniques of presenting to students what we want them to learn. Thus, the crucial questions for educational researchers would be: How can we increase the student's motivation to learn what we think he should learn? What is the best information to give to the students? How can the materials be best organized? When is the best time to present certain materials? What are the best techniques of insuring memory and retention of various kinds of information? What are the best methods of evaluating the student's acquisition of the materials? All these questions may seem like legitimate problems of education. Certainly, much educational research in the past has been focused on such problems. Yet questions of this kind seem to be based on a common assumption — namely, that the chief task of the educator is to decide, on the basis of superior knowledge and experience, what is best for the student, and to use the most effective methods for influencing him to learn it.

Let us now summarize what it would mean if the social scientist should choose to follow a course of action that is based on little faith in the capacity of the individual. His approach to the problem of leadership would begin with attempts to select those few who possess certain qualities judged as desirable for our leaders; to those few he would give special training, emphasizing the skills of diagnosing individuals and situations and the skills of influencing and changing others. The logic would be quite simple and straightforward: choose a select group of leaders; train them thoroughly in the most effective diagnostic and analytical methods upon which to base plans for their followers; and then equip them with the most effective skills for influencing others to accept and to carry out these plans.

THE GROUP-CENTERED APPROACH

Should the social scientist choose to adopt a positive, hopeful, and constructive view of man, his approach to problems of leadership would be *group-centered* rather than *leader-centered.* This approach would involve focusing on questions essentially concerned with enhancing the group rather than its leader. This is the approach to leadership which we intend to illustrate throughout this book. The group-centered approach to leadership involves first a radically different definition of the concept of leadership itself; then it calls for the social scientist to address himself to questions that are distinctly different from those which become the focus when the subject is approached from a leader-centered view.

In contrast to the leader-centered approach, with its necessary concern for discovering improved methods of selecting and training leaders who can better guide, direct, and influence their followers, the group-centered approach will be concerned with discovering methods of developing the potentialities of group members so that they may become more capable of constructive self-direction — in fact, so that they may become less dependent upon their leaders and free to take an active part in shaping their own destinies. This means that the social scientist would address himself to such problems as:

What are the personality variables that inhibit the free expression of an individual's capacities?
What are the chief factors in an individual's environment that tend to suppress and restrict spontaneous expression?
How do individuals learn to be constructive and productive members of a group?
What are the main factors that predispose individuals to submissive dependence upon authority figures?
What are the effects of various kinds of leader behavior on the spontaneity and freedom of expression of group members?
How can a formal leader create the conditions most conducive to the development of self-directing and mature groups?

These are only a few of the many kinds of problems that would naturally attract the attention of social scientists, if they adopted a group-centered approach firmly rooted in a positive and hopeful philosophy of the nature of man.

Furthermore, whereas the leader-centered approach to problems of leadership would naturally center on the task of discovering and developing methods and techniques to facilitate the leader's diagnosis and assessment of his followers' needs and opinions, the group-centered approach will lead toward discovering ways by which each individual group member may learn to clarify and diagnose his own needs and learn how to achieve self-understanding. Efforts will be made to create the necessary conditions whereby the individual is freed from overdependence on the skills and insights of the expert, whether that expert is physician or therapist, trainer or foreman, parent, teacher, or even minister. Students of the science of human behavior following this approach would then busy themselves with experimentation aimed at discovering the necessary psychological conditions that enable individuals to look deeper within themselves; they would search for clues that would suggest why the presence of an authority often inhibits self-examination and makes people look for causes of their difficulties in the behavior of the authority rather than in themselves.

The teacher, for example, would focus her efforts on helping students learn to take more responsibility for analysis of their own strengths and weaknesses in various subject areas. She would experiment with methods that placed responsibility on the whole class for maintaining discipline, and so on. The consultant hired by an industrial organization to evaluate personnel policies would try to involve the entire organization in the process of diagnosing its weaknesses and difficulties. He would relate to members of the organization in a way that would encourage them to examine their own practices, instead of hiding what they really do from the prying consultant, as happens so often when a consultant takes full responsibility for diagnosing the ills of an industrial organization. Thus, a group-centered approach would mean a radical change in our orientation to the problem of diagnosis in groups. Instead of concentrating on how he could improve his ability to diagnose the needs or the ills of his group, the leader would focus on improving the group's skills of diagnosing and assessing its needs and ills.

One final way in which the group-centered approach would differ from the leader-centered is with regard to the problem of the leader's power to influence the members. As we have seen, the leader-centered approach inevitably leads toward the goal of finding more effective techniques by which the leader can control or influence the members. Propaganda, salesmanship, persuasion, power, and prestige would be the necessary equipment of the successful leader. Contrast this with what it would mean if the social scientist operated within the frame of reference of a group-centered approach. Some of the principal problems he would attack might be:

> How can a leader insure that contributions of members receive as much consideration by the group as those of the leader?
> How can a leader facilitate better understanding within the group of the ideas offered by group members?
> What can be done to reduce the susceptibility of members to propaganda and persuasion?
> How can members learn to accept responsibility for critically examining and evaluating the worth of contributions of members, as well as those of the leader?

These and other related questions would attract the attention of social scientists should they adopt a group-centered approach to the problem of leadership.

Thus this approach would lead us toward the discovery of ways of developing the creative potentialities of groups, not just of leaders.

Instead of concentrating on the diagnostic skills of leaders, it would open the doors to new methods of helping groups learn to diagnose their own needs and ills. It would help us discover more effective means by which group members could be freed of dependency on authority, so that they might develop their faculties for creative, critical, and independent thought and action.

This is the basic orientation which has guided the writer in his own efforts to discover and try out new patterns of leadership. It is merely one possible pathway a person can choose in his own personal search for new ways of relating to groups. In subsequent chapters the writer offers an opportunity for the reader to travel briefly with him down the pathway that has led him to a formulation of group-centered leadership, as yet incomplete and inadequately tested, but already challenging and rewarding to him.

A Way of Thinking About Leadership and Groups

3

The terms *leadership* and *group* have acquired many different meanings, and thus each of these terms is often used variously to stand for different things. To minimize misunderstandings arising from these different meanings, we shall attempt to specify at the outset what these terms shall mean when we use them here. Our definitions have not been developed with the idea of excluding other definitions, for there are several useful ways of thinking about leadership and groups. Instead, it is with the hope of improving our communication with the reader that we begin by examining closely the meanings we intend to give these terms.

HOW SHALL LEADERSHIP BE DEFINED?

The problem of selecting a useful and workable definition of *leadership* is a difficult one. None of the definitions employed by previous writers seems quite appropriate, but one is reluctant to offer yet another. The writer has resolved this problem by utilizing certain elements of previous definitions, yet modifying them on the basis of his own particular experiences.

Early writers employed a definition of leadership that was based on the assumption that certain people were born to be leaders, whereas others could not possibly acquire this social role. Leadership was thought to be a set of unique traits or characteristics handed down from one person to another, chiefly through heredity. Certainly in the days when strong social class barriers made it almost impossible for just anyone to acquire the skills and knowledge required for positions of leadership, it must have appeared that leadership was inherited, simply because it emerged so frequently within the same prominent families. As social and economic class barriers gradually lost their early impenetrability and leaders began to emerge from different strata of society, it became evident that leadership was more than a matter of being born in the right family or with the right combination of genes. As a result, in recent times, this simplified notion of leadership has had few proponents. (In passing, however, attention is called to the recent re-emergence of this theory in the form of the Nazi belief in the genetic superiority of the Aryan "race.")

When the early genetic theory no longer fitted the facts of leadership in society, it underwent some modification. Whereas it was earlier believed that leadership was solely a function of *inherited* traits and characteristics, the modified theory held that leadership was a function of traits and characteristics that were *acquired* chiefly through experience, education, and special training. Even this concept of leadership left some room for the influence of heredity on such commonly accepted traits of leadership as intelligence, physical stature, energy output, and so on. While this way of conceptualizing leadership recognized the importance of environmental factors, it retained the old notion that leadership was a matter of specific traits and characteristics. A person by virtue of possessing the traits of leadership would somehow acquire the role of leader. Furthermore, a person so endowed, it was believed, would emerge as a leader in many, if not most, group situations.

As is apparent now, such a theory did not take into account the fact that group situations differ greatly with respect to the kind of leadership required or with respect to the particular needs of the members. The importance of the situational factors predisposing certain persons to positions of leadership became more widely recognized when social scientists began to search for "universal traits" of leaders — traits which were possessed in common by many different leaders. In an early study, Jennings concluded from her investigation of leadership among girls in a correctional institution that

> Both isolation and leadership were found to be products of interpersonal interaction and not of attributes residing within persons. . . . (45, p. 24)

Jenkins reached a similar conclusion after an extensive review of leadership studies:

> Leadership is specific to the particular situation under investigation. Who becomes a leader of a given group engaging in a particular activity and what the leadership characteristics are in the given case are a function of the specific situation including the measuring instruments employed [by the investigator]. Related to this conclusion is the general finding of wide variations in the characteristics of individuals who become leaders in similar situations, and even greater divergence in leadership behavior in different situations. (44, p. 75)

A more recent study by Martin, Gross, and Darley produced findings which led the investigators to conclude:

> The paucity of differences [between leaders and non-leaders] found tends to negate the trait approach to leadership and suggests the utilization of other frames of reference in the study of leadership phenomena. (58, p. 842)

Studies such as these all but killed those theories relying on the notion that certain traits of leadership were possessed by all leaders. Social scientists began to see the necessity of also considering the situational aspects of leadership. Consequently, in the wake of the initial stage of debunking the earlier trait approach came theories emphasizing the importance of the total *situation*.

The next step in the direction of a more sophisticated concept of leadership was the inclusion of the factor of the personality and needs of the "follower" in the equation of leadership. Recent investigators have suggested that the phenomenon of leadership can be understood only if we consider factors relating to the personality of the *followers*, as well as those relating to the *leader* and the *situation*. Thus, Sanford writes:

> It can also be strongly argued that the *follower*, *too*, *must be studied* if we are to see most clearly what happens in a leadership event. It is the follower as an individual who perceives the leader, who perceives the situation, and who, in the last analysis, accepts or rejects leadership. The follower's persistent motives, points of view, frames of reference or attitudes will have a hand in determining what he perceives and how he reacts to it. These psychological factors in the individual follower cannot be ignored in our search for a science of leadership. (82, p. 159)

Here is a point of view in which the significance of the "followers" is recognized. Leadership is seen as a complex phenomenon of group life in which different types of individuals carry out a variety of leadership functions depending upon both the qualities possessed by the different group members and the specific needs of the group at a given period of time. Cecil Gibb emphasizes this interactional aspect of leadership:

> Leadership is always relative to the situation — relative, that is, in two senses: (*a*) that leadership flourishes only in a problem situation and (*b*) that the nature of the leadership role is determined by the goal of the group; and this is, in fact, the second principle of leadership, that it is always toward some objective goal. The third principle is that leadership is a process of mutual stimulation — a social interactional phenomenon in which the attitudes, ideals and aspirations of the followers play as important a determining role as do the individuality and personality of the leader. (30, p. 272)

It appears, then, that recent theories have dropped the trait approach in favor of one that emphasizes the situational aspects of leadership. Yet, in their haste to drop the trait theory, some social scientists may have swung too far in the direction of emphasizing the situation. Conceivably, the situationists may be overlooking the possibility that at least some traits predispose their possessors to positions of leadership, or at least increase the chances of their becoming leaders in most situations. As

Gouldner (36) warns us, though the trait approach is not fashionable today and the situationists seem to have won the day, "uneasy rests the head that wears the crown of science."

A recent study, for example, confirms Gouldner's skepticism about an exclusively situational theory. Chowdhry and Newcomb (18), in a study of the relative ability of leaders and non-leaders to estimate group opinion, found that leaders of the groups that were studied were significantly superior to non-leaders and isolates in the ability to estimate group opinion on familiar and relevant issues. These investigators offer the following interpretation of their findings:

> This suggests that certain personality traits of the overchosen [leaders] make it possible for them to be in fuller communication with the members than can be said of the underchosen. (18, p. 56)

Chowdhry and Newcomb point out, however, that such traits may or may not be *potentially* of a general nature — that is, they may not make a person a leader in other groups. In other words, the findings of this study merely suggest that those who have developed an ability to judge the opinions and attitudes of the members of their *particular* groups are more often chosen as leaders of those groups. Nevertheless, such leaders may have the *potential* for judging the opinions of members of *any* groups, though this potential may not become actualized in other groups.

This leaves us with a slight suspicion that certain traits may eventually be discovered which universally bring leadership status to those possessing them, as long as the various groups have something in common — say, communication. We agree with Gouldner's analysis of this problem:

> Suppose, however, it were demonstrated that all human groups contained *some* elements in common, and that these could be spelled out. It should therefore be expected that there would be *some* leadership traits manifested commonly by all leaders. In short, there is no reason why leadership traits should constitute adaptations only to the *diversities* of groups; they should, too, involve adaptations to the *similarities* of groups. Thus, some leadership traits should be unique, specific to concrete groups and situations, while *some* could be common to all leaders. (36, p. 35)

This position, if sound, paves the way for an integration of the previously perceived divergent theories about leadership. Such an integration would retain the important contribution of the situationists — their emphasis on the demands of the group and the needs of the members; yet it would not close the door on the possibility of discovering *some* traits or characteristics of importance to leaders in most group situations. Perhaps now we can formulate a working definition of leadership based upon a theory that allows the kind of integration suggested above.

A WORKING DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

First of all, leadership can be conceptualized as an interaction between a person and a group, or, more accurately, between a person and the members of a group. Each participant in this interaction may be said to play a role, and these roles in some way must be differentiated from each other. The basis for this differentiation seems to be a matter of influence — that is, one person, the leader, influences, while the other persons respond. Gouldner's thinking is helpful here, for he sees the leader as

> any individual whose behavior stimulates patterning of the behavior in some group. By emitting some stimuli, he facilitates group action toward a goal or goals, whether the stimuli are verbal, written, or gestural. (36, pp. 17–18)

Although not apparent from this definition, the determination of the kind of stimuli that will facilitate group action is a function of the nature of the group's goals and the reaction of the group to the contribution (stimuli) of the individual. Stated more simply, a potential "leader" of a group somehow must perceive what it is the group wants, he must contribute something that will move the group closer to that goal, and finally his contribution must be "accepted" before he can be said to have patterned the group's behavior. Thus a leader also must be led, in that he is influenced by the behavior of the group members to the extent that the group's norms, problems, and goals actually determine the kind of contribution that will pattern the group's behavior. In this sense, leadership is truly a process of interaction.

Thus, leadership is also relative to the situation. What will pattern group behavior in one situation may not in another. For a member of an athletic team to try to inspire in his teammates a fighting spirit may be an act of leadership when the team is losing but may invoke ridicule when the team is assured of winning by a large margin. Because a group itself is a moving, changing social system, its requirements for leadership will usually be different from time to time. This is not to deny, though, that a *particular* group may always require certain functions to be performed, so that a certain few members in a group may continuously emerge as leaders more often than others, even over a long period of time in the life of the group. The principle that "leadership is relative to the situation" also need not exclude the possibility that there may be certain "universal functions" that always facilitate change or movement in many or all kinds of groups. Perhaps it is more accurate, then, to say that the *pattern of leadership* is relative to the situation. Some specific functions may be required at all times in a single group or at various times in all groups, but the total pattern of leadership functions will be unique for each group and perhaps even for each situation confronting a group.

Probably the principal significance of such a conception of leadership is that it shifts the focus of attention from a *single* leader to a role that potentially may be occupied by *any group member* who is able to emit appropriate stimuli which facilitate group action toward a goal. True, in some groups one member during a short period may occupy that role more frequently than other members, as when a group is engaged in reaching a particular goal and the functions required to attain this end can be carried out best by one member. Yet our definition allows for the emergence of a new leader when the group selects a new goal.

A complicating factor, yet one that does not detract from the usefulness of our definition, is the common phenomenon of a group situation in which one person acquires a relatively permanent and often formal or institutionalized role of group leader. This may occur more or less informally when the group learns to depend upon one member as a reliable source of stimuli, as with a group that becomes committed to relatively unchanging and limited goals. Or it may occur formally, as in so many of our larger organizations, when a person is given a formal and designated role (and usually a title). Even when leadership roles become institutionalized in this way, a leader to be "followed" (or to continue having his actions pattern group behavior) must be perceived by the members as facilitating the group's efforts at reaching some goal.

As Knickerbocker has so clearly pointed out:

> The leader may "emerge" as a means to the achievement of objectives desired by a group. He may be selected, elected, or spontaneously accepted by the group because he possesses or controls means (skill, knowledge, money, association, property, etc.) which the group desires to utilize to attain their objectives — to obtain increased need satisfaction. . . . However, there will be no relationship with the group — no followers — except in terms of the leader's control of means for the satisfaction of the needs of the followers. Either the leader's objectives must also be those of the group (and he himself be seen by the group as a means to their attainment), or else accepting the leader's direction must be seen by the group members as the best available means to prevent reduced need satisfaction. (47, p. 33)

Thus, whether the leader is formally designated by the group (or by someone outside the group) or spontaneously emerges, his behavior still must be perceived as facilitating to the group if he is to remain the group's leader in a psychological sense.

One further element needs to be added to this conception of leadership. Often overlooked, yet of great significance, is the possibility that once a person is perceived as a leader in one situation, the members may in future situations tend to respond more readily to *his* behavior than to others'. This is to say that stimuli from one who has been perceived *already* as a leader may have a higher probability of directing the group's behavior, perhaps because of the attitude that somehow he is a more "legitimate" source of influence. Again Gouldner is helpful here, for he stresses this factor with exceptional clarity:

> In this sense a leader would be an individual who has the *right* to issue *certain* kinds of stimuli which tend to be accepted by others in the group as obligations. . . . The reasons why a leader's stimuli may be held as legitimate are varied. The leader may be viewed as being a person with unusual endowments; perhaps his stimuli are legitimated by virtue of the legal or traditional system of norms governing his appointment or election, perhaps because of his

> knowledge or expertise, or because he exemplifies other qualities valued by the group. (36, pp. 19–20)

The extent to which this *generalization of leadership potential* occurs in a group has, as we shall see later, an important bearing on the overall functioning of a group. Here we call attention only to the fact that the potential for leadership behavior may not be equally distributed throughout a group, even though our conception of leadership fosters the notion that any member through his own behavior *can* pattern the behavior of the group.

THE NATURE OF THE GROUP

Leadership cannot be examined without considering some of the characteristics of the group in which leadership operates. By conceptualizing leadership as an interaction between an initiator (or facilitator) and those who respond to or accept the facilitation, we become obligated to examine the situation in which this interaction occurs — namely, the group itself.

WHY PEOPLE JOIN GROUPS

Let us first assume that people join groups because they perceive that membership in a group somehow will provide satisfaction of some basic need. Membership in a group is not merely a matter of chance, for people actively search for relationships with others in a group situation because of the promise or expectation that they will be rewarded through the satisfaction of certain needs. Furthermore, people will continue in a group only if they continue to have an expectation of need satisfaction.

In order that this explanation may not convey the notion that human behavior is controlled through some kind of "pleasure principle," a restatement of the above is required. The problem here is to avoid giving the impression that human behavior can be explained simply by invoking a principle that people seek what gives them immediate reward or pleasure and avoid what does not. To explain human behavior, and in this case the behavior of individuals leading to membership in groups, a more appropriate concept is *self-actualization.* By this is meant the basic tendency for individuals to actualize their potential. In the words of Kurt Goldstein, to whom we are indebted for this concept:

> We can say, an organism is governed by the tendency to actualize, as much as possible, its individual capacities, its "nature," in the world. . . . This tendency to actualize its nature, to actualize "itself," is the basic drive, the only drive by which the life of the organism is determined. . . . Normal behavior corresponds to a continual change of tension, of such a kind that over and over again that state of tension is reached which enables and impels the organism to actualize itself in further activities, according to its nature. (32, pp. 196–197)

Such a theory of the basic tendency of man allows us to modify our earlier proposition about why people join groups. Thus, people join groups because they perceive them as a possible means for self-actualization — a way of actualizing their own capacities. A group, therefore, promises the individual an opportunity to grow, develop, fulfill, enhance, create — or simply to *become* that for which he has the potential.

THE TASK OF THE GROUP

Assuming that a group consists of individuals seeking self-actualization, the essential task of the group becomes the selection of goals, and of means for reaching those goals, which will provide the maximum self-actualization of its members. Put in another way, the task of the group is to adjust to the changing needs of its members — to find the best solutions to its continuous problem of meeting their needs. But because the needs of one individual may often conflict with the needs of another, a group must find ways of fulfilling the needs of each person at the least expense to all other members. It must find some formula for distributing its available, and usually limited, means for satisfying the needs of its members. Consequently, a group is in a continuous state of adjusting to the tension, conflicts, and problems arising from the ever-changing needs of its members.

THE RESOURCES OF THE GROUP

We may think of a group as engaged in a continuous process of problem-solving (or adjusting), utilizing whatever resources are available for solving its problems. By *resources* we mean many different things — skills, facts, ideas, tools, materials, and the like. Some of these resources, it is apparent, are *human* resources — that is, they are made available to the group *through* some behavior of an individual. Others are physical resources, such as tools and materials. The physical resources exist outside of individuals. Though not intending to overlook the importance of the physical resources of a group, we shall place primary emphasis upon the human resources in our subsequent treatment of group behavior.

With regard to a group's human resources, it can be said that each member of a group is a potential resource person. Each member possesses skills, ideas, and facts which may at one time or another serve as resources on which the group may draw as it is confronted with a problem. When a group is described in this way — as consisting of as many potential resource persons as there are members — certain crucial problems naturally become the concern of the student of group behavior. For example, if we think of a group as engaged in a kind of collective problem-solving, utilizing whatever resources it can muster for this task, we find it necessary to come to grips with such questions as the following:

> Do conditions exist in the group which discourage resource persons (the members) from making their resources available to the group?
> What factors tend to inhibit communication of resources (ideas, facts), thus rendering them unavailable to the group?
> Are some kind of resources less often tapped than others during the process of problem-solving?

Such questions naturally follow an attempt to conceptualize a group as we have done here. They are questions that demand investigation if we are to understand the process by which people in groups, each seeking ways of satisfying the need for self-actualization, solve their problems, resolve conflicts, make decisions, and reach goals.

THE WISDOM OF THE GROUP

Underlying the idea that a group is a collection of potential resource persons is the assumption that the best solutions to a group's problems will be those which grow out of the *combined resources* of its members. Stated in a very simple way, this is an assumption that the best solution of a problem faced by two or more people interacting as a group will be the product — or, better, the resultant — of whatever resources each is able to bring to bear on the problem. This is not to say that all problems *require* the resources of all the members of a group, nor that wise decisions can *only* be made by a group when every member makes some contribution. Obviously, some wise decisions are made by groups on the basis of the resources of only a few members — or even of one person alone. For example, a group may take action on the basis of certain information which only one member is able to provide, as when a business organization decides to purchase raw material from one concern rather than another on the basis of the purchasing agent's knowledge of the prices being asked for the material. The assumption of the wisdom of the group implies, however, a belief that the best solutions will be made when the group utilizes all of the appropriate and *available* resources of its members. Thus, in the example just cited, if the business organization makes the decision as to where it will buy its raw material on the basis of the price information alone, when in fact some of the workers possess knowledge that the cheaper raw material is too inferior in quality, then perhaps the wisest decision will not have been made.

Such a common-sense rationale for the validity of the wisdom of the "group" is supported by empirical findings from research studies. A number of investigators have conducted controlled laboratory studies designed to test whether group performance is superior to individual performance in the solution of certain kinds of problems. For example, Shaw (84) found that a group of people interacting did a better job in solving reasoning problems than a single person. The superiority of the group in this study seemed to derive from its function of evaluating suggestions and rejecting bad ideas. Such an explanation is consistent with Maier's (55) findings that an individual is often blocked from finding successful solutions to reasoning problems because of habitual ideas or "sets" which tend to perpetuate themselves.

In another study, conducted by Bovard (14), it was shown that a group in which members interacted more with each other and were allowed to make their own decisions acquired significantly more clinical insight and understanding than a group in which verbal interaction was largely between the leader and the individual members. The significance of these findings is that they support the proposition that people operating together in a situation that is not conducive to interaction and critical thinking are less efficient than people operating in groups in which interaction, participation, and creative thinking are encouraged.

In theory, the ideal group would be one in which the creative potential of every member is available to the group as it meets its problems and attempts to arrive at appropriate solutions. This ideal is at least approximated in some of the groups reported by K. K. Paluev, Research and Development Engineer for the General Electric Company, who has been attempting to try out what he calls the idea of "collective genius" in developing improved machines and industrial methods. The principle underlying his idea of "collective genius" is that people working cooperatively and collectively can create products far superior to those created by persons working alone. Paluev describes the operation of this principle in several projects in which an attempt was made to enlist the contributions of many group members for the purpose of designing improved power transformers. The outcome of these projects was the development of transformers that were far superior to any existing ones. Paluev concludes from these projects:

> These accomplishments again could not have been achieved were it not for the ability of the organization to integrate its diversified faculties for every type of problem that confronts it. (65, p. 8)

Commenting further on the rationale of the idea, Paluev adds:

> Since it is impossible to obtain enough individuals who are "complete genii," industrial management and all co-workers must be content with the fact that they themselves as well as their colleagues fall short of perfection to a considerable degree. . . . The collective-genius system of organization has radically improved the status of individual members of society. As each one lacks some of the necessary faculties, or at least does not excel in them, he by himself could not therefore obtain the income and other benefits that he does in partnership with other partial genii of the organization. (65, p. 6)

Paluev's experiments, although lacking the scientific rigor of more carefully controlled experiments, suggest what can be accomplished by a group when its members are given opportunity to contribute creatively, even when the task is a highly technical one. In his projects many of the most creative ideas came from untrained workers, who in the ordinary industrial organizations are not always consulted on such technical problems.

Many other examples from industry tend to support the principle that participation of group members actually pays off in terms of better group decisions or better group products. Although many of these experiences have not been carefully evaluated, nor have their results always been checked against some measurable criterion, they are valuable case histories of apparently successful attempts at utilizing the previously untapped resources of group members. Joseph Scanlon, for example, has been unusually successful in devising methods whereby management encourages the participation of workers in decision-making at the policy level. Some of the positive results of these programs have been summarized by Stuart Chase in his *Roads to Agreement* (17, pp. 139-143). Chase quotes Scanlon's conclusion from these experiments:

> The average employer has little conception of the wealth of imagination and ingenuity lying untapped in the heads of the workers. (17, p. 143)

Although studies such as these lend support to our proposition that groups will be more effective and reach better solutions when more of the resources available in the group are utilized, much more experimentation is required to establish the universal validity of "the wisdom of the group." Studies will have to be carried out using different sized groups and employing different kinds of problems, ranging from simple to complex. At present, however, it can be said with a moderate degree of confidence that a belief in the wisdom of the group is not mere wishful thinking or armchair theorizing. Under certain conditions groups have consistently performed better than individuals working in isolation; and groups utilizing the available resources of their members have been shown to reach far more creative solutions than when contributions of members are not encouraged or utilized.

A Common Misunderstanding

Though the assumption of the wisdom of the group seems simple enough, it is often misunderstood. For example, the argument is frequently advanced that such an assumption is not valid, on the grounds that leaders alone sometimes can make better decisions than a group. Thus, it is claimed, a better assumption would be that groups make the wisest decisions when they have the *wisest leaders.* The proponents of the notion of the wisdom of the leader, however, formulate the problem incorrectly in the first place. They state the problem in terms of whether the group membes *or* the leader can make the soundest decisions for the group. When stated in this way, it is apparent that leader and group are separated; the group is pitted against the leader. This strange yet pervasive idea of the separation of leader and group radically alters the problem, and frequently stacks the cards against the group.

This is true because in most groups the leader frequently has exclusive access to certain facts pertinent to the problem requiring a decision. The position of the executive in the formal structure of an industrial organization, for example, is usually that of the "communications center" — that is, communication from both above and below converges on him and is filtered through him. He is, in other words, the group's gatekeeper with regard to the flow of communication. It is natural to expect that he, the leader, might often make better decisions than the members of his organization who are so much less informed of the pertinent facts. Yet, as emphasized above, this separation of leader and group takes us away from the main issue.

Suppose now the question is formulated in this way: Can a group leader (*without* the resources of the group members) make wiser decisions than the total group (*including* the leader)? This way of viewing the problem allows us to restate the original assumption as follows:

> A group decision made on the basis of the available resources of all members, including the leader, will be a wiser decision for the group than a decision based upon the resources of the leader alone.

So stated, the question of who can make the best decision for a group pits the *total* group against any part of itself. Thus the admonition, "Father knows best," which implies that father knows better *than* son, should be challenged by some perceptive son, who might say, "Yes, but does father know better than father *and* son?"

The "wisdom of the group" is also challenged or refuted by those who question whether the group members (in this argument, they are usually referred to as the masses, the common man, the uneducated public, and so on) are *capable* enough to participate in really important decisions. It is pointed out that man by nature is unthinking, that he acts irrationally out of his animal needs and emotions. Or it is argued that man is basically fallible, selfish, greedy, ego-centered. Thus, groups of such men *need* strong leaders. It is just as sensible, however, to arrive at the opposite conclusion from the same premise, assuming for the moment that man cannot be trusted. Thus, if man *is* fallible, selfish, and greedy, it is all the more important that no *one* such person make all the decisions for the many.

UTILIZING THE GROUP'S RESOURCES IN PROBLEM-SOLVING

The belief in "the wisdom of the group" is based on the assumption, then, that wise solutions will be arrived at by a group when it is successful in utilizing all of its available resources in the problem-solving process. The problem-solving process can be thought of as involving four different stages, if the group is to arrive at the wisest decision.

The process of problem-solving in a group begins when the group faces a problem, just as thinking and reasoning in an individual are initiated when he is confronted with a problem. Unlike the situation with an individual, however, in a group not all of the members may feel that they do face a problem, or various members may see the problem quite differently. Hence, for a group to initiate the process of problem-solving there must be some agreement that a problem exists and some common notion of what the problem is. The second stage involves diagnosing the problem, analyzing its nature, determining possible causes, and so on. The third stage entails the actual making of a decision as to how to approach or solve the problem. Frequently, of course, diagnosis of the problem and the search for ways of solving it go on simultaneously — that is, as more is learned about the nature of a problem, different solutions suggest themselves. The fourth stage of the problem-solving process usually involves carrying out the decision through some kind of action.

Recognizing the Problem. How and by whom is the group's problem situation recognized as a problem? Let us suppose that a university finds itself unable to meet its costs of operation. Probably not *all* of the members of the university organization perceive the problem at once. At first, no doubt, the situation is recognized only by the top administrative officers, the comptroller's office, and a few of the faculty members. Many other members of the university group may not even be aware of the university's overall financial picture, or if they are they may not perceive it as a problem of serious personal concern to them. It is unlikely that students, clerical workers, and janitors, for example, would recognize the problem until some direct action of the administration affected tuition fees and pay checks. In most groups not all the members share alike in the recognition of problems. Usually, as in this illustration, the problem is recognized or felt by the "leaders" of the group, and not always do the leaders make an effort to involve group members at this early stage of the problem-solving process.

Diagnosing the Problem. The second stage of the process is diagnosing the problem. To continue with the illustration of the university, we may assume that there could be many different causes of the financial dilemma. That is, the problem could be diagnosed in a number of different ways:

Income from endowments is too low.
Tuition is not high enough.
Salaries of the faculty are too high.
The university is buying too much equipment.
Building costs are too high.
Maintenance operations are inefficient and costly.
There is too much waste of existing equipment.
There is unnecessary overlapping of functions between departments.
Too many courses are being taught.
There are too many faculty members.
There are too few students.
Alumni are not giving the university enough support.

It will be immediately apparent that each of these different diagnoses might call for quite different solutions to the problem. But the question is which of these diagnoses is most accurate.

Theoretically, the best diagnosis will be made when most of the pertinent facts are available. Yet in the problem facing the university, many of the facts required for evaluating each of the possible diagnoses are possessed by students, instructors, maintenance personnel, alumni, clerical workers, and the like. Consequently effective problem-diagnosis would seem to require procedures which would involve all of these groups in order to bring the pertinent facts to bear on the diagnosis. Such procedures, however, are rarely used in groups. Usually only a small number of people are involved in the stage of diagnosis, and usually these are top-level administrators who seldom possess more than a small fraction of the facts known by all the members of the group. Information is usually filtered carefully and discreetly as it travels up through the various levels of authority, so that administrators fail to get all the pertinent facts.

Decision-Making. The third stage of the problem-solving process involves making a decision. In most organizations the actual making of decisions is traditionally considered to be the prerogative of the leaders, those at the top of the authority structure. This is especially true with regard to important decisions, or what are commonly called policy decisions. If, however, all members of a group have been involved throughout the earlier stages of the problem-solving process, they should at this point be capable of participating constructively in the making of decisions.

This stage of the problem-solving process is a very complex one. Although social scientists are beginning to study the dynamics of decision-making, as yet few clear-cut principles have emerged from their studies. Nevertheless, among social scientists there exists a widespread recognition of the value of group member participation in decision-making if groups are to arrive at satisfactory decisions, and if they are to carry out their decisions effectively. The pioneering study of Lippitt, Lewin, and White (50), for example, showed that democratically led groups in which the members were allowed to make decisions about their work activities were significantly different from more leader-centered groups in the following respects: (*a*) the members were less aggressive toward each other, (*b*) they showed less dependence upon the leader, (*c*) there was more group initiative to start new work, and (*d*) more time was spent in productive work.

In a more recent study by Solem (87), groups which developed their own solutions to problems under conditions conducive to expression of feelings were found to reach solutions that tended to be of higher quality than solutions developed by other groups. Furthermore the solutions reached by the participant groups reflected "an accurate sensing of feelings and consideration for the values and feelings in the group."

Studies such as these, although few in number, provide considerable empirical evidence for the hypothesis that groups that encourage members to participate in making decisions will be productive and will arrive at decisions that are of high quality and satisfying to the members. Furthermore, the findings strongly suggest that, when this condition exists in some groups, the members show more initiative and independence and are less hostile to the leader and to each other.

Accepting and Carrying Out Decisions. A fourth stage in the problem-solving process of groups is the action stage during which decisions are acted upon or carried out. Naturally, one would expect that the most effective groups would be those whose members actively participate in implementing decisions, once they have been made. There is growing evidence that decisions are more widely accepted and more effectively implemented when they have been group decisions. For example, the study by Radke and Klisurich (71) showed conclusively that "group-decision" methods were more effective in changing the food-buying habits of housewives than were methods relying on teaching, telling, and lecturing. The study by Coch and French (19) demonstrated the effectiveness of group-decision methods in changing a stereotyped attitude in an industrial organization. Whereas previous attempts on the part of management to change the stereotype had failed, marked changes in attitude and conduct were effected when the total group was given the problem and allowed to formulate its own decision.

These studies lend considerable scientific support to what has become a common-sense belief — namely, that people will more readily accept and carry out a course of action if they have previously participated in the process of deciding on the particular course of action. Gordon Allport makes the distinction between "reactive" behavior, characteristic of persons who have not had a voice in deciding their own destiny, and "active" behavior, characteristic of persons who become ego-involved in matters affecting them. In summarizing a number of experiments dealing with the problem of participation, Allport concludes that

> a person ceases to be reactive and contrary in respect to a desirable course of conduct only when he himself has had a hand in declaring that course of conduct to be desirable. (2, p. 123)

The implication of this for the problem of decision-making would seem to be that, quite apart from the real possibility that better decisions can be made when there is a maximum participation of group members, there is growing evidence that decisions which people have had a hand in making will be better accepted and carried out than those in which the people concerned are not involved.

Factors Operating Against Effective Group Functioning

4

Although in theory the ideal group would be one in which each member is free to participate creatively and in which the available resources of all group members are effectively utilized in the problem-solving process, most groups do not even approximate this ideal. Most groups in our culture are operating far below their maximum potential, whether they be small face-to-face groups, such as committees and discussion groups, or larger and more complex groups, such as business or industrial organizations, schools, churches, or community organizations. We need only think back on our own experiences in such groups to remember how often we have been disappointed and disillusioned because a committee on which we served failed to accomplish anything tangible, or because we were not given an opportunity to present our views before a decision was made at a staff conference. How often have we felt that we were not contributing all we could as members of our church or community group? Have we not all worked in organizations in which we felt that most of the important decisions were being made by a handful of officers or even by a single "boss," and furthermore that many such decisions were poor ones?

Today it is commonplace to find disgruntled, unproductive, and apathetic members of almost any group — workers with poor morale and low productivity, committee members who never actively participate in the work of the group, teachers who feel helplessly strait-jacketed by rules and administrative procedures imposed on them by their supervisors or principals, union members who feel that their leaders do not really represent their interests and welfare.

Not only are most groups working below their capacity in terms of reaching their immediate goals, but they also fall far short at the task of developing and improving their resources in order to meet problems that may arise in the future. An effective group would be one which provided the opportunity for its members to develop new skills, that is, to increase their own potential. A group experience *could* be made a growth experience for individuals, so that the potential of the total group would always be increasing. Too often the sole criterion of the effectiveness of groups has been how well they solved an immediate problem, how efficiently they completed a single task, how much they produced in a short span of time. There is a tendency to overlook the more long-range criterion of how much the group is enhancing its members or developing future leadership, how much each individual is encouraged to develop and increase his own potential.

The leader who sets out to help a group become more effective and grow toward maturity is faced with a difficult task. At once he will discover that within each individual group member there are many barriers that effectively prevent that member from participating and contributing freely and creatively. Barriers in the group's organizational structure or barriers emerging from the interaction of members of the group may also operate against the group's development.

BARRIERS TO CONSTRUCTIVE PARTICIPATION

Feelings of Personal Inadequacy

A deterrent to the creative participation of a group member is a persistent feeling of personal inadequacy. People may differ in the degree to which they possess such feelings, but it is probably true that everyone has some feelings of inadequacy. Some may feel inadequate only in certain groups, as for example an uneducated person in a group of professionally trained people. Others may feel a general sense of inadequacy or worthlessness in almost all groups, or in all interpersonal relationships. Such a pervasive and generalized feeling of worthlessness is clearly expressed by one of the members of a group of college students with whom the writer recently worked. In the following verbatim excerpt from one of the group sessions we find this student verbalizing some of these deep feelings.

> Yeah. I never was satisfied, to be truthful, never was satisfied with myself. But my relatives increased that dissatisfaction so much that I couldn't look at things at all with an emotional objectivity. My cousin has always been a very strong — there's always been an — an element of envy there. I've always envied him. He's always had a lot of clothes, friends, everything that a person could want perhaps. Skills, social finesse, popularity — everything. As long as I can remember I've always envied him. Whenever there would be a social gathering, he'd be the life of the party. He's the same age as me. And I don't know, I'd be nothing. I always hated that. Yet I couldn't do what he would do. He'd make jokes and whatnot — good jokes, too — I could never think of doing that. I'd be just the opposite — drab, lifeless, oh, just hideous. I mean, I hate myself because of it. And I realize that after I left high school I said to myself, I will not apply myself to my studies, will not find myself doing what I had been doing all these years. That struck me as the height of worthlessness. So I — that's what led me into this thinking. I went into philosophical channels. But I didn't know any other way to get this social adjustment or whatnot.

It is highly unlikely that this person, feeling as he does about himself, could be a productive or creative group member. In earlier group sessions this student frequently mentioned his inability to talk to others and his consistently unsuccessful efforts to be an accepted member of any of the various student groups on the campus.

How a person's feelings of inadequacy in a particular group can directly inhibit his participation is illustrated in another excerpt from a recorded interview, this one with a member of a training group. The member is here evaluating her early experience in the group.

D: Well, I know this — simply that I was very insecure in my lack of knowledge of all these things [theories of group dynamics] — very insecure. And I feel much more secure, and naturally more a part of the group now. I felt that certain members were rejecting me perhaps on the basis of the fact that I was not participating too much. And I think they resent that in me, whether rightly or not, I wouldn't know.

Interviewer: So you kinda feel that you really have changed toward being more secure than you were to begin with?

D: Oh, yes. I'm sure of that. I have more knowledge and am more a part of the group.

Interviewer: As I get what you're saying, you feel that acquiring the additional knowledge which you felt you lacked so strongly at the beginning has really been the thing to give you that security. Is that what you're saying?

D: I think so.

This group member reveals just how much her early failure to participate in the group was due to her feeling that she lacked the proper knowledge; only when she began to acquire that knowledge could she make a contribution to the group. These two illustrations could be duplicated in almost any other group situation, for it is common for group members to hold back their contributions because of feelings of personal inadequacy. As long as there are members who feel insecure and inadequate, the group is losing potential contributors and is denied the creative resources possessed by such members.

It would seem important, then, for the group leader to recognize that all members of his group are not equally free to participate, because of differences in amount of self-confidence and feelings of adequacy. A person's feelings about his competence may inhibit his participation, regardless of whether he "actually" does have competence, as measured by some external and objective criterion. We know that the person's internal and subjective reality — how he evaluates himself — is the significant determiner of his behavior. Therefore, his self-concept is a crucial factor in determining the extent of his participation in groups. We know that an individual can develop a persistent concept of himself as "one who cannot make worth-while contributions in a group," just as another develops a concept of himself as a "poor speller." Such self-concepts, though they may have originated from an experience in only one or a few groups, can become so generalized that they operate to inhibit participation in all groups.

FEAR OF EVALUATION AND REJECTION

A person who is overly sensitive to the evaluations of other group members and is threatened by the possibility of being rejected by them can hardly be an effective participant in a group. Much of what he has to offer that is unique and creative will be held back for fear of the negative evaluations of others. What such a person does contribute may be only that which he is certain will conform to the views of others. This is illustrated in the following excerpt from a recorded interview with one of the members of a leadership training group. Mrs. D, the group member, is trying to analyze why it is that other group members never disagree with her. Her statements about red and green lights refer to a device that was being tried out experimentally with this group. Each group member controlled a red light and a green light located on a large board facing the group. By pressing levers at his seat the group member could light up a red light, indicating disagreement with someone's statement, or a green light, indicating agreement. Mrs. D. is concerned because she gets only green lights from other group members.

Mrs. D: And I would like to know why I don't get any red lights. I think it is because I don't say anything that is worth red-lighting.

Interviewer: That seems to you to be the meaning of that — what you say is just what the group wants at that time.

Mrs. D: That's right. And I think that as we were working on that chart yesterday I saw that I participated, sure. I was talking a great deal, yes. But every so often as I went back over it I was supporting a comment made previous to my comment. I would build up more green lights [agreement] than the person who spoke before. But no reds. But I was actually supporting something that someone else had said. It was not mine. It wasn't just supporting it for the sake of supporting it.

Interviewer: That is, you weren't consciously trying to get all green lights, but as you look back on it there was not so much of you going into it as it was just simply supporting someone else.

Later in the interview, Mrs. D. tells of an earlier experience in which this same pattern occurred.

> *Mrs. D:* I can definitely recall now a situation that occurred a year ago, when I could have, by saying a few words as a member of a minority group, swung a vote on an important issue, if I had gotten up and made a statement. But I didn't get up and make the statement. And I didn't because a great number of my peers were there and they were on the opposite side. And I didn't quite have the nerve to get up and buck. Yet we made a wrong decision, I think. It's going to be fixed up now, but we have wasted a lot of time.
>
> *Interviewer:* Looking back on it, you're sorry that you didn't.
>
> *Mrs. D:* Absolutely. Because I think I could have swung the rest of the group. And several people were poking me, saying, "Get up and say it." And I didn't. I just sat there.

Again, later in the interview, Mrs. D. refers to the same incident:

> *Mrs. D:* And the peers whom I didn't want to speak against knew perfectly well that I stood on the vote with the minority. I already had done that. . . . I had definitely taken the stand in front of the peers I didn't want to offend. But I couldn't take the active participation of getting up to make the statement — of speaking to my point.

This excerpt gives us a view into the inner experience of a group member who is beginning to understand the true nature of her participation in groups. She sees now that it has been one of merely going along "with the majority" and supporting other people. She has been afraid to give what is distinctly her own. The fear that others might evaluate her seems to be an important deterrent to free expression of her own opinions. It is of interest, too, that she feels the group made a "wrong decision," and we can speculate that its decision might have been different had it not been denied the opinion which was suppressed by the fear of one of its members.

Perhaps in no other institution in our culture does fear of rejection operate more than in business or industrial organizations. The fear of losing one's job often seriously deters spontaneous and creative participation in one's work group or in the organization as a whole. Although this fear has been partially alleviated by the emergence of the power of unions as representatives of workers, yet there still remains a broad area of relationships and functions in industry outside the domain of union-management bargaining. The threat of no advancement, of demotion, of dismissal, still hangs heavy over the worker's head, and it is safe to say that this threat inhibits his free expression and spontaneous participation, even when management sincerely tries to encourage such participation.

In our educational institutions, too, the fear of evaluation invariably operates to reduce spontaneous participation of teachers in the administration of our schools and of students in the classroom learning situation. For students, a variety of complex and systematic evaluation procedures have become institutionalized in our schools. Publicly and theoretically such evaluation procedures are supposed to be incentives for achievement; in practice, as every teacher knows, they often reduce creative thinking, inhibit unique achievement, and foster dependence upon the thinking of "experts" or conformity to the point of view of the instructor. Nathaniel Cantor, in his challenging book *Dynamics of Learning*, makes this criticism of modern education:

> Parents want the child to acquire their ideals and values. The teacher, no less, but in a professionally disguised manner, projects his beliefs upon the pupil. In both cases there is *a demand* for improvement, and a code of behavior, corresponding to the ways of the adult, is imposed. The sanctions for this demand take many forms such as love, punishment, bribes, comparison with others, marks and grades.
>
> The weapons, however diverse, are reducible to some form of praise and blame.
>
> The child adopts the values of others as his own, either because he is afraid of punishment or because he seeks praise. The exercise of his own will, independent of the approval or disapproval of others, is made difficult. He is taught, that is, imposed upon by others, and cannot educate himself.
>
> The criticism by parents and teachers becomes the self-criticism of the child. If the latter is not given the opportunity to fight back,

> that is, to project his self-criticism on to an outer reality, the self-criticism remains locked within the child and leads to feelings of inadequacy.
>
> School authorities aggravate the burden of guilt imposed upon children by the home. By denying pupils sufficient opportunity to assert themselves, self-expression is crippled. Praise and blame, reward and punishment, become the criteria for behavior. Motivation for conduct is placed outside the will of the student and is controlled by the standards of others. The child conducts himself in accordance with what he expects to receive from others. He learns to get around people, using the tricks he has learned from those who have manipulated him. (16, p. 74)

If this diagnosis of education is a valid one, then we can be certain that the fear of negative evaluation, ridicule, and criticism is operating within students to reduce their creative self-expression and participation in the learning process. Essentially this means that the typical class of students, with its traditional kind of instructor, is far less effective in reaching its goals (in this case the intellectual growth of each member) than a class in which each student, as well as the instructor, is free to contribute.

Reactions to Authority

Many group members are caught up in the endless and utterly fruitless task of discovering and identifying with the "correct" authority. From childhood on, the individual is seldom given the opportunity to learn to trust his own perceptions and interpretations of the world of reality or to rely upon his own organic experiencing of this reality. On the contrary, he is forever placed in situations where he is provided with ready-made interpretations and the second-hand or even antique experiences of a variety of experts. He learns to ask, "What is right?" "What do the authorities think?" "What is the accepted belief?" He does not learn to ask: "What do I think?" "What does this mean to me?" "How do I see this?" Nowhere is this more apparent than in education. In our schools and colleges we seem to be developing thousands of professional critics but few creative and original thinkers. Students jump like mountain goats from one expert to another — or, as is appropriate at some universities, from one great book to another — forever seeking the one infallible source of authority.

This idea of course is not new. Erich Fromm expresses it clearly when he discusses "the illusion of individuality" that pervades our culture. Man is really *not* free from authority. Although he has thrown off the shackles of institutional authority, anonymous authority has taken its place:

> He would be free to act according to his own will, if he knew what he wanted, thought, and felt. But he does not know. He conforms to anonymous authorities and adopts a self which is not his. The more he does this, the more powerless he feels, the more he is forced to conform. (29, p. 255)

Nathaniel Cantor refers to the same tendency in modern man:

> Much of one's behavior as an adult is counterfeit because it does not express one's real self in its differences and spontaneity. We become stencilled stereotypes stamped with the "do's" and "don'ts" of authority. We live in two worlds, the one of socially-accepted standards to which we conform, and an inner world where we ineffectually indulge in luxurious phantasy, not always an innocuous form of self-expression. (16, p. 75)

While both Fromm and Cantor in these passages emphasize the *conforming* effect of the person's early experiences with authorities, it is well to emphasize too the *reactive* effect of these same experiences. Many individuals expend a great deal of their available energy fighting against an authority figure. For such persons, when they come up against an authority figure, are prone to resume the battle which almost always has its origins in their early experiences with parents.

These two basic reactions to authority — conformity and submission, or reaction and hostility — are present to some degree in each of us. It is probably true that they exist side by side in every person, a basic ambivalence toward authority. This is the classic transference reaction, described by Freud, in which the individual in the present transfers to authorities the ambivalent attitudes that he held toward his parents in the past. The significance of these "transference attitudes" for our understanding of the dynamics of group behavior lies in the fact that group members who are either overconforming to authority, or overreacting against it, are not really free to contribute what is creatively and uniquely their own. The submissive and dependent group member submerges his uniqueness in order to conform to others; the hostile and reactive group member offers nothing of himself, but merely opposes and tears down the contributions of others.

It is in their relationship to the group leader that submissive or reactive group members clearly manifest these attitudes toward authorities. The submissive group member refrains from contributing something new to the group unless he is assured that his contribution will be accepted by the leader or that it will conform to the leader's values and standards. He is not capable of accurately assessing the worth of the leader's contributions, so tends to accept them as infallible. He is only too willing to give over the reins of the group's life to the leader. In short, he is lost to the group as a unique contributor, for nothing truly "of himself" is made available to the group.

A group consisting of dependent and submissive group members and their leader is a group in name only. Practically and functionally it contains only one group member, the rest being so closely identified with the leader that they are mere replicas of his personality.

In a group consisting of members reacting against authority, the situation is somewhat different. In such a group the *leader*, in a sense, is lost to the group. This is because whatever creative contribution he offers to the group will be opposed and rejected. It is as if the reactive group member were saying, "No matter what the leader says, I won't like it." Furthermore, many of the contributions of the reactive member will probably not be appropriate to the reality of the group's particular problem, since they will often be mere "counterproposals" to the leader's contributions. As such, the contributions of the reactive member will tend to be based on distortions of reality. As an example, let us consider a boss and his workers in an industrial organization. The problem faced by this group might be the establishment of a reasonable level of production. The boss suggests 100 units per day. The workers, reacting against the boss as an authority, oppose this figure even though they know that 100 units per day could be achieved by the group. In such a situation the workers are responding not to the problem but to the boss.

In a reactive group the members unite against the leader, and in a sense create a new group, standing in opposition to the leader. This seems to be what has too often happened in industrial organizations; hence the existence of two groups within the same organization, *management* and *the workers*. Where the workers have formally organized in reaction to management, then we find *management* and *the union*.

EGO-CENTERED PARTICIPATION

Another barrier to the development of a responsible group is the tendency of some group members to use the group situation to satisfy highly individual needs which are unrelated to, or in conflict with, the needs of other members. Although it is probably true that an individual will continue as a member of a group only as long as certain of his basic needs are being satisfied, nevertheless the behavior of one person may continually inhibit the satisfaction of the needs of others. One of the most difficult things for a group member to learn is how to achieve the delicate balance between satisfying his own needs and helping others to satisfy theirs. Those who successfully find this balance are the ones who ultimately contribute the most to the group's development.

A list of all of the various personal needs that are brought to the group by its members would be almost endless. A strong need for *attention* motivates many group members, who frequently participate not so much to help the group solve a particular problem as to get the attention and recognition of others. Some members may have strong needs for *aggression* against other persons, or, as indicated earlier, against the leader as an authority figure. The manifestations of a tendency toward aggression are numerous: aggressive members will often attack others openly, or, more subtly, they may criticize whatever contributions are made by others. Because aggression is so frequently directed against other persons, the contributions of the aggressive member are frequently "off-target," in that they are "person-centered" rather than "issue-centered." Criticisms are really of the other person rather than of his idea or suggestion. On the other hand, a strong aggressive tendency may actually serve as a barrier to a group member's spontaneous participation in discussions. Because he so fears his own aggression, such a person may learn that it is safer not to participate at all, rather than become involved in an interaction which might provoke his aggression. The aggressive person also can have an inhibiting effect upon the participation of other group members, once they have learned to fear his hostile attacks.

An interesting study by Fouriezos, Hutt, and Guetzkow (26) throws light on some relationships between ego-centered participation and group effectiveness. These investigators devised observational rating techniques for evaluating the following self-oriented needs of group members: dependency, status, dominance, aggression, and catharsis. They first demonstrated that independent observers using this scheme showed satisfactory agreement as to the degree of self-oriented needs displayed by group members in "conference" discussions. Then they demonstrated that their measure of self-oriented needs was significantly related to other measures of the group's processes. Some of their results are extremely pertinent to our present discussion of ego-centered participation. For example, they found that groups with the highest scores on self-oriented needs rated themselves lowest on certain measures of "satisfaction." The groups exhibiting more self-oriented-need participation were least satisfied with their meetings in general, with the decisions reached, with the way the groups reached their decisions, and with the chairmanship of their meetings. The groups with the highest self-oriented-need ratings also tended to complete fewer of the agenda items considered at their meetings. Finally these high-need groups showed more group conflict and tended to perceive themselves as less unified than the groups that exhibited less self-oriented-need participation. These findings strongly support the thesis that ego-centered or self-oriented-need participation is an observable phenomenon in group behavior and that its presence in groups is related to low productivity, low group-member satisfaction, group conflict, and feelings of disunification.

Often ego-centered participation may simply be the result of the inability of a group member to perceive the needs of others. Some group members characteristically demonstrate a narrowing of perception, in the sense that their behavior is always a response to a very narrow range of stimuli, these frequently being their own internal pressures and tensions. In a group discussion, for example, there are always a large number of "stimuli to behavior" — the words of the previous speaker, the words of other persons who have been contributing, the feelings that often lie behind the spoken word, the dynamics of interactions between members, the unusual sensitivity of certain persons to criticism, and so on. In addition to those stimuli existing in the immediate present, there are innumerable facts and events in the past history of a group which can serve as effective stimuli to the behavior of members in the present. For example, the fact that the previous managers of an industrial concern had a militant attitude toward unions can be a factor of tremendous significance in a bargaining discussion between the present management group and labor, and failure to perceive the effect of this historical fact in the present behavior of the labor members could lead to serious conflict and misunderstanding. Some group members have the ability to perceive most of the psychologically operative elements in a group situation, while others seem peculiarly blind to all but their own personal feelings and internal pressures. The field theorists in psychology would say that some group members respond to only a small area in the total effective psychological field, or that they are responding in terms of a restricted life space. Hence their contributions are likely to be so highly ego-centered as to be inappropriate to the total complexity of the problem or situation facing the group.

An example familiar to all is the group member who always seems to be "grinding an axe," raising the same personal issues, or referring every matter back to his same personal problem. Other group members soon come to feel that his contributions are irrelevant to the issue at hand, that he is simply "playing the same old worn-out record."

Another example is the group member who is so eager to get something off his chest that he fails to perceive that others want to speak.

Then there is the group member whose comments never seem to link up with anything said previously, but rather seem to come "off the top of his head" or directly from his own internal tensions. Others in the group often become puzzled about such contributions, wondering just how they fit in with what is *going on in the group*. This group member is responding to a psychological field that is so unique to him that it does not overlap much with the psychological fields of the other members.

The study by Chowdhry and Newcomb (18), mentioned in a previous chapter, provides some experimental evidence bearing on the differential sensitivity of members in perceiving the attitudes and opinions of others in the group on issues relevant to the group. From sociometric ratings, leaders, non-leaders, and isolates were first identified. Then attitude questionnaires were administered to all group members, each member being asked to indicate first his own reaction to each item, then to estimate the percentage of the group members that he believed would agree with each statement. The investigators conclude as follows:

> It was found that leaders of a group are significantly superior to non-leaders and isolates in their ability to judge group opinion on familiar and relevant issues....

In discussing these findings they suggest

> that certain personality traits of the overchosen make it possible for them to be in fuller communication with the members than can be said of the underchosen. The leaders' thinking is in terms of the group.... The isolates, on the other hand, are "self-centered" and "relatively self-bound." Their channels of communication do not operate in both directions, and are often blocked entirely. They are relatively incapable of going out of themselves to understand the group's problems....
>
> The ability to function as an effective group member would also seem to be related to the ability to perceive the opinions and attitudes of the group. The more awareness an individual has of an environment, the more satisfactorily he can adjust to it, other things equal. Each individual adjusts to the situation according to the way he perceives it, and not as it "really" is. Since the leaders' perceptions of the prevailing attitude trends existing in a group tend to be more realistic than those of non-leaders and isolates, the chances of their adequate adjustment are greater than those of the non-leaders and isolates. (18, p. 57)

The findings of this small study seem to support the notion that there are significant differences between members of a group with regard to the ability to perceive certain aspects of their psychological fields, in this case the attitudes of other group members. Furthermore, this ability seems to predispose members to positions of leadership in the group, which suggests that this ability somehow is associated with group facilitation and need-satisfaction. It thus seems highly probable that the effective group will be one in which the members are more perceptive of what is going on about them, more aware of the norms and standards existing in the group, more sensitive to others in the group — in short, the participation of the members will be based upon a larger and less restricted "perceptual field."

BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Although some of these "barriers to constructive participation" also inhibit effective communication between individuals, there are certain factors in the dynamics of interaction within a group which have a more direct effect upon communication between members.

Communication is the lifeblood of every group. Groups depend upon effective communication in order to determine the needs of their members, to make decisions on the goals which will fulfill these needs, to establish procedures for reaching their goals, and to coordinate the efforts of members in carrying out these procedures. But effective communication not only involves some kind of *expression* but also requires that someone receive an *impression*, the meaning of which to him is nearly identical to the meaning intended by the person emitting the expression. In the language of semantics, effective communication requires that the intentional meaning equal the extensional meaning. Effective communication between individuals or between groups means a sharing of meanings. There must be some common understandings shared by the participants in a discussion, or else there cannot be communication between them. The industrial manager who sees a new piece of equipment as a means to higher production and the representative of labor who sees it as a potential cause of laying off hundreds of workers will not, in a discussion about whether to introduce this piece of equipment, be talking about the same thing. We often forget that the same object or event may have entirely different meanings when perceived by different persons. Communication for the purpose of arriving at a decision that will be accepted by both management and labor in this instance will be effective only when the industrial manager and the workers' representative develop a common understanding or perception of the new piece of equipment. When both perceive it as a means of increasing production but at a terrific human cost, then there is a greater chance of their arriving at a mutually acceptable decision.

How do individuals develop shared perceptions or common understandings of the same objects or events in order that they may work out effective solutions to their conflicts? Naturally they must begin to communicate. But we know that there are many barriers to effective communication.

LIMITED FACE-TO-FACE CONTACTS

In many groups the members are restricted from frequent face-to-face contact, whether by barriers of organizational structure, formalized channels of communication, status differences, or the actual physical layout of plant or building. Although written communication can often be substituted for verbal communication, the latter offers infinitely more opportunity for the intimate give-and-take necessary for effectiveness. Effective communication requires a situation in which there is ample and immediate opportunity for the communicants to check whether they are understanding each other and to work through the misunderstandings that inevitably arise in interpersonal relationships.

One of the most serious consequences of restricted face-to-face contact is the fact that members who are not in communication develop stereotyped attitudes and feelings toward each other. Frequently these are hostile attitudes. Under conditions of restricted communication the attitudes of one person toward another may develop into a persistent hostile attitude, a private or "autistic" hostility. In his stimulating article on autistic hostility, Newcomb offers the following definition:

> Autistic hostility is thus based upon a more or less fixed perception of self-other relationships, the persistence of which is maintained by barriers to communication (overt and/or covert) with the object of hostility. . . . (63, p. 73)

Commenting further on the conditions for the development of hostile attitudes, Newcomb writes:

> Privacy — that is, some degree of isolation behind barriers to interpersonal communication — is not a necessary condition for the development of hostile impulses into persistent attitudes. But it is, I believe, a common condition. . . . (63, p. 72)

From recent studies of social attitudes Newcomb finds support for the thesis that contact (communication) with members of the group toward which one has hostile attitudes tends to alter those attitudes:

> As applied to Negro-White relations, for example, the hypothesis would be as follows: individual hostility is most likely to be re-

> duced when institutionalized barriers to communication with members of the other group are crossed, with the shared support of one's own group. (63, p. 81)

Newcomb does not neglect to point out that communication in itself may not be enough to reduce interpersonal hostilities. It is essential that the communication be nondefensive, involving no threat to the individual. Under these conditions, changes in attitudes are most likely to occur. This is why in psychotherapy radical reductions in autistic hostility occur. The therapist creates a permissive, nonthreatening, accepting climate in which the client feels safe enough to bring his "private" hostilities out in the open.

DEVALUATION OF WORTH OF OTHER MEMBERS

In many groups effective communication between members is hampered by the attitude that no one except the "leader" can possibly make a worthwhile contribution to the group. This attitude is often expressed in the form of a stereotype that discussion in a group amongst the members is nothing more than "a pooling of ignorance," or that group products are certain to be reduced to "the lowest common denominator." Both of these stereotypes are usually based on a low opinion of the worth of group members. Often in the writer's teaching experiences this attitude has been expressed by students in a variety of ways:

> "We enrolled in the course to hear you, not the other students."
> "If you say something we know it's right, but that isn't true with the students."
> "We assume you have more to contribute because you have been given a job by the University."
> "We can listen to other students anytime, but we paid to hear you."

These are only a few of the many manifestations of students' lack of respect for the contributions of other students. Such attitudes are obviously not conducive to effective communication between students, who will be little inclined to attend and listen to comments coming from the "uninformed." The writer has been particularly interested to observe this phenomenon in several of his seminars in which there were students who he knew actually possessed more information than he on certain topics under discussion. Yet the members of the seminar made no effort to assess the resources contained in their group, and frequently evidenced a lack of confidence in contributions made by these "resource people," simply because they were not formal leaders.

It is not surprising that group members devaluate one another's potential worth, when we consider how such attitudes are fostered. As the child in our culture develops, he is thrown into one group after another — the family, the classroom, the Sunday school, and so on. In each of these groups the "leader" characteristically shows little respect for the worth and integrity of the child. In the school, instruction does not begin with a consideration of the child's experience, but rather fosters in the child a distrust of his own experience or his own interpretation of reality. The child is rewarded for accepting and adopting the ready-made experience of adults, experts, and authorities. Using the concepts of G. H. Mead, we can say that the child begins to perceive himself (and others like him) as he feels he is perceived by his parents, teachers, and leaders. He learns to look at himself and at others as persons whose ideas, values, and attitudes are somehow less worth while or less "valid" than those of parents, teachers, leaders, and other authority figures. Consequently it is not unusual to find many members of groups who are not as attentive or receptive to the contributions of other group members as they are to those of their leaders. Thus effective communication between group members is seriously hampered, and in some group situations, almost nonexistent, whenever group members are more concerned with *who* says something than with *what* is said.

THE TENDENCY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TO DEFEND HIS IDEAS

In the process of communicating our own opinions and ideas we often merely make the other person defend *his* opinions and ideas all the more vigorously. This reaction we have all experienced and observed. As if by magic we can make another person state his position more conclusively and defend it more tenaciously, simply by confronting him with an opposing position.

There seems to be something in human nature — whether learned and acquired or rooted in the organic make-up of all living organisms — something that predisposes man to defend his world of reality against the threat of change from without. Prescott Lecky has put it this way:

> Immersed in an environment which he does not and cannot understand, the individual is forced to create a substitute world which he can understand and in which he puts his faith. He acts in consistency with that conception, derives his standards and values from it, and undertakes to alter it only when convinced by further experience that it fails to serve the goal of unity. Since this self-made scheme of life is his only guarantee of security, its preservation soon becomes a goal in itself. He seeks the type of experience which confirms and supports the unified attitude, and rejects experiences which seem to promise a disturbance of this attitude. (49, p. 50)

This simple, common-sense notion can be verified by the everyday experiences of any of us. But it has been slow to receive scientific acceptance as a fundamental principle of human behavior. Social scientists have dealt with manifestations of this basic human tendency, but have seemed unaware of its universality. We have observed the tendency of the small child to respond to parental pressure by doing the opposite of what the parent wanted him to do. Social scientists have named this kind of behavior "negativism." The patient's reaction to the psychoanalyst's interpretations (that is, to the psychoanalyst's perceptions of the patient's reality) we have observed and named "resistance." The persistence of certain attitudes and concepts about the Negro, even in the face of known experimental evidence to the contrary, is a common datum of social psychology. These stereotypes, existing in "logic-tight compartments," sometimes defy alteration. When we try to teach the child that the sun does not go around the earth, we will be dismayed when he says, "That's silly, because in the morning it comes up over there and in the afternoon it goes down over there." It is in the mentally ill, however, that we can see dramatic evidence of the tendency to fight off, to explain away, or to attack the proponent of, an idea that is inconsistent with the patient's organized system of attitudes and beliefs. After years of work with mental patients we are just beginning to accept the futility of reassuring the fearful, explaining away the hallucinations of the schizophrenic, or logically proving to the paranoid the impossibility of his being God.

Apparently attitudes, beliefs, and behavior patterns which are deeply rooted in the individual's emotional life are most resistant to change. When a certain belief is emotionally interwoven with thousands of other beliefs and attitudes, it is next to impossible for a person to alter the one belief without also reorganizing most of the others. All the logic in the world may not affect such a belief, unless there is opportunity for altering all the other interrelated beliefs to make them consistent with a change in this one.

Take, for example, our next-door neighbor's belief in the superiority of the Democratic Party. We may ordinarily think of such a belief as an isolated belief, but it is only one in a complicated and more or less consistent system of beliefs. In our neighbor's case this system may include his belief in the judgment of his father, who also favored the Democratic Party. It will probably include hundreds of other beliefs — such as favorable attitudes toward labor, social security, the "common man," veterans' pensions, farmers' subsidies — all of which he associates with the party of his choice. The belief system undoubtedly contains negative attitudes toward big business, the depression, a Republican he once knew, a reactionary newspaper — all associated in his mind with the the other party. This is of course a tremendous oversimplification of the whole belief system within which our neighbor cherishes his belief in the Democratic Party. For in addition, his belief system embraces a myriad of attitudes, remembered experiences, and feelings — and we know that within such a system there will always exist elements of which our neighbor himself is unconscious. He may, for example, not even be aware of attitudes that he developed toward big business when his father was out of work fifteen years ago.

Is it any wonder, then, that our attempts to change this neighbor's political sentiments will be met with active resistance? Threatened by pressure from the outside to change even a simple belief, the individual takes steps to protect his complicated system of related beliefs from the inevitable shaking up it would suffer should even this one belief become altered. Some psychologists argue that one of the distinctive characteristics of the human personality is this tendency to maintain consistency within one's total system of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments.

This basic tendency of the human being to resist change when pressures are put upon him by others is a real barrier to effective communication within a group. This seems true because in the process of making decisions and working together cooperatively group members inevitably discover areas of disagreement. When such conflicts occur, one or more of the members must change, else they either continue to disagree or give up trying to communicate altogether. Too frequently changes do not occur, and the latter alternatives are chosen. When people disagree, the tendency is for each to put more effort into trying to change the position of the other. This often leads to open conflict, each person trying to "out-change" the other. As we have seen, this is seldom an effective way of changing others. The end result is often a power struggle between two militant and hostile parties: communication breaks down, autistic hostility increases, and the conflict grows even more intense. If the two parties cannot work out of this cycle, or at least isolate themselves from each other (and, as in the case of two nations existing in the same world, isolation is not always practicable), then they usually end up fighting.

Origins of Group-Centered Leadership in Practice and Research

5

It would be impossible to trace the origins of all the principal ideas underlying group-centered leadership. Clearly, many of these ideas have been part of the history of thought for centuries. Philosophers, writers, educators, political scientists, sociologists — these are but a few of the thinkers who throughout history have given serious consideration to various aspects of the problem of "facilitative" or "democratic" leadership. In this chapter we shall limit ourselves to describing only some of the more recent and more directly related origins of group-centered leadership, perceived as an overall approach to leading groups. In addition, this chapter will present a brief review of some of the research studies whose findings throw light on the effects of group-centered leadership upon groups and their members.

ORIGINS OF GROUP-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

The idea of group-centered leadership has sprung from two principal sources. One of these is the group dynamics movement; the other is the practice of psychotherapy, particularly client-centered psychotherapy.

The Group Dynamics Movement

The leaders in the group dynamics movement have made significant contributions to our understanding of the various requirements for effective group leadership. They have stimulated thinking and research on different types of leadership, focusing attention, for example, on the differences between "autocratic," "laissez-faire," and "democratic" leadership. Of extreme importance is the fact that the group dynamicists have sensitized large numbers of persons to the fact that leadership is not something magical and mystical, but is a set of skills and attitudes that people can learn and develop. Those who have been influenced by group dynamics have been made conscious of their own leadership behavior. One leader expressed this clearly when he said, "I will never again sit in front of a group as its leader without being aware of what I am or am not doing to the members of that group or to the group itself." The group dynamics movement is indeed significant for both its impact upon society and its contribution to our understanding of leadership as a scientific problem.

In a previous chapter, reference has already been made to some of the more significant ideas about leadership that have come out of the training programs of the group dynamicists. Their notion that the leader might be a trainer or a facilitator of the group's own development toward self-direction and maturity, their concept of leadership as a set of functions which can become distributed throughout the group rather than fixed in the leader's role, and their insistence that leadership skills can be learned — these are three important ideas that have contributed to our present conceptualization of group-centered leadership.

However, from the point of view of the writer, there are certain limitations inherent in the group dynamicists' conceptions of leadership, and these the reader may wish to consider.

In the first place, current group dynamics theory may tend to leave one with the picture of an extremely *elusive leader* — sometimes a group has a formal leader, sometimes it does not. Just how this leader emerges and under what conditions he disappears are seldom made clear. It is almost as if group dynamics theory, with its emphasis upon "shared leadership," "group-member roles," and "group development," does not permit the inclusion of the concept of *leader*. Yet when the group dynamicists begin to analyze group phenomena, they are forced to take account of the leader. This dilemma often shows up both in group dynamics theory and in group dynamics research. In their theoretical discussions of group behavior, the group dynamicists place much emphasis upon leadership as a group of functions, but make only passing references to the fact that in almost all groups a disproportionate number of the leadership functions are concentrated in one person, the formal or the "perceived" leader. This aspect of social reality is not changed simply by calling the leader by another name — such as change agent, trainer, consultant, or human relations specialist. The psychological effect of a "trainer" on the group member is likely to be very much the same as that of a leader, a boss, a supervisor, a director, and so on. We cannot rid the group of the inhibiting effect of its leader simply by calling him something else.

This tendency seems also to prevail in the recent researches reported by the group dynamicists. Although these studies have focused on many different aspects of group life and group interaction, they have dealt very little with the group leader, his behavior, his methods, his attitudes, or his psychological effect upon the group. This omission is surprising in view of the fact that much of the present interest in group dynamics can be traced to the classic and pioneering experiments of Lewin, Lippitt, and White (50) on the effect of different types of leaders on group behavior, a study carried out as early as 1939. Since that time, however, the group leader has seldom been the primary object of attention in the group dynamics researches.

A second characteristic of current group dynamics theory has to do with an apparent *confusion as to whether it is the group leader* (*change agent*) *or the group itself who decides upon the group goal*. It is clear both in the theory and in practice that the group dynamics leader, because he feels more "mature" than the group, often decides upon the desired social change and then uses his" methodology" to influence the group in the desired direction. This role, it is our conviction, is radically different from one in which the leader uses his skills to facilitate a process whereby the group decides upon its own particular desired goals. Benne, in his penetrating article on democratic ethics, seems to take a definite stand in favor of the leader as a "facilitator":

> In the first place, the unique person, because of his very uniqueness, represents an irreplaceable and incomparable center of choice, deliberation and valuation. Persons are, therefore, to be taken as ends in the sense that all the ways of a society . . . are to be judged ultimately by their services to the development of each member-person. In the second place, a social policy is held to be poorer than it need be if it does not represent an induction from the unique insights and experiences of every person concerned with that policy. On both these bases, the principle of participation by all persons affected by a social policy, as equals, in the process by which such policy is formulated and reconstructed has been approved as a (if not the) central norm of democratic operation. (10, p. 308)

Lewin, however, does not seem as clear about this norm of democratic operation:

> Sometimes people must *rather forcefully be made to see* what democratic responsibility toward the group as a whole means. It is true that people cannot be trained for democracy by autocratic methods. But it is equally true that to be able to change a group atmosphere toward democracy the *democratic leader has to be in power and has to use his power* for active re-education. (10, p. 56–57) (Italics added)

From this it is easy to infer that the leader *already has in mind* the direction of group development and that he is expected to use his power to make the group see the wisdom of his choice of its goals. However, the fact that the goals may be "democratic" ones does not, in our opinion, necessarily justify the leader's use of power. It is debatable whether it is any better for a leader to use power to change a group in the direction of a "democratic" goal than for him to use power to change a group in the direction of a nondemocratic goal. In a sense we are raising the age-old question of whether the end justifies the means.

A third possible limitation of current group dynamics theory is its *neglect of the problem of a group's dependence upon its leader.* If a measure of a group's ability to function "democratically" is the extent to which its members are free from dependence upon its leaders, then one of the important criteria of effective leadership must be how effectively it reduces this dependency. An adequate theory of group behavior must recognize that in most groups there is a great deal of dependency upon the leader.

Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that so often the leader controls some of the means by which group members satisfy their needs. But it is also due to the lack of opportunity offered the individual in our society to experience a group situation in which he may learn independence. Our families, our schools, our churches, our industrial and business organizations — all seem to foster a very real, even if subtle, dependence upon the leader. In our culture the developing child constantly learns that one member of a group is its leader and the rest are followers. One member, our culture seems to say, is endowed with superior qualities that enable him to make better decisions for the group than the group could make for itself. The child learns that the world consists of the strong and the weak, the learned and the unlearned, the minister and the ministered to, the manager and the managed.

Leadership for democratic group development first must be acutely aware of the group's habitual tendency to depend upon that leadership. Second, it must provide conditions that will reduce dependence and increase independence. On both of these counts, group dynamics theory seems lacking. One may doubt that group members effectively learn independence when the group leader, through his reluctance to relinquish his power, conveys only a limited trust in the capacities of the group. Even though it is the leader's intention to relinquish his power *eventually*, as the group dynamicists emphasize, his unwillingness to trust the group *at the very outset* may act as a serious deterrent to the group's growth toward independence. This is such a critical point that we shall want to return to it many times in our subsequent presentation.

There is a fourth possible limitation inherent in the group dynamics conception of leadership. This is the *tendency to emphasize the rational and intellectual aspects of the process by which group members learn to become creative participants*, while overlooking the emotional or irrational aspects of the process. This can be seen in an emphasis upon the need for the group to learn certain skills, to learn how to carry out the roles of "observer" and "recorder" which groups are said to require. Similarly, the group leader is conceived of as a trainer, a teacher, an expert consultant who possesses more know-how than the group members. On the other hand, there is but little recognition that individuals, if they are to become creative and spontaneous participants, frequently must undergo quite radical changes in their emotionally bound attitudes toward themselves and others. We know from both everyday and clinical experience that people are not free to contribute creatively when they feel a lack of worth, when they have little self-confidence and inner security. These can be more formidable barriers to participation in a group than lack of something creative to contribute. Consequently, changes in attitudes that are so intimately related to the individual's consistent and enduring self-concept are not likely to be produced by the usual educational appeals to the intellect. On the contrary, individual group members often must be given a kind of "therapeutic" group experience in order to develop self-confidence, a feeling of worth, a sense of personal security. Whether persons become active participants and creative contributors in a group depends to a great extent upon whether the group situation facilitates changes in their concepts of themselves as persons. Thus, what a group leader does or does not do to create an atmosphere conducive to self-reorganization is crucial for an adequate theory of group leadership.

Origins in the Field of Psychotherapy

Recently many significant ideas about leadership have emerged from a rather unexpected source, the field of psychotherapy. Psychiatrists and psychologists trained in the practice of psychotherapy, having first discovered new ways of successfully helping individuals to become more effective and productive persons, have in recent years been exploring ways of extending their distinctive methods and understandings to group situations in the hope that groups can be helped in the same way as individuals. As a result, some truly exciting experiences have been reported involving the use of these "therapeutic leadership methods" with various kinds of groups.

The fact that psychotherapy has been contributing to the field of leadership accounts for some of the labels that have become attached to these newer approaches to leadership. For example, from England's Tavistock Clinic has come the term "social therapy" (42), an approach in which some of the principles and methods of psychoanalytic therapy are employed in consultant relationships with industrial organizations and other groups. From the group of psychologists associated with the newer "nondirective" or "client-centered" psychotherapy have come such terms as "nondirective teaching" (6) or "student-centered teaching" (76). The term "interpretive group leadership" (41) has been used to describe a method of leadership in which the leader employs the method of interpreting verbalizations of group members as in psychoanalysis with individuals.

To compare the role of the therapist with the role of the group leader is to understand why the field of psychotherapy has made significant contributions to present conceptions of leadership. Essentially the therapist attempts to help the *individual* actualize his potential as a person — that is, make effective use of the skills, ideas, attitudes, and feelings that make up his total personality. The therapist helps the individual to reach a state of greater maturity, helps free him to continue his psychological growth and development. Rogers, reviewing more than forty research studies concerned with measuring the process and outcomes of client-centered psychotherapy, summarizes the results:

> What, then, is the current answer to the question, does the process of client-centered therapy involve any change in the behavior and actions of the client? Pulling together the threads from these various studies, we may say that, during the process of client-centered therapy, the evidence at present available suggests that the client's behavior changes in these ways: he considers, and reports putting into effect, behavior which is more mature, self-directing, and responsible than the behavior he has shown heretofore; his behavior becomes less defensive, more firmly based on an objective view of self and reality; his behavior shows a decreasing amount of psychological tension; he tends to make a more comfortable and more effective adjustment to school and to job; he meets new stress situations with an increased degree of inner calm, a calm which is reflected in less physiological upset and more rapid physiological recovery from these frustrating situations than would have been true if they had occurred prior to therapy. (76, p. 186)

The group leader is concerned with helping the *group* actualize and utilize its own creative potential. Like the therapist he is striving to create conditions conducive to the group's development and growth in the direction of greater maturity. Would it not be as desirable for a group as for an individual if the group leader succeeded in bringing about some of the same changes in his group as those suggested by the researches in client-centered therapy — namely, "putting into effect behavior which is more mature, self-directing, and responsible than the behavior shown heretofore"; behavior that is "less defensive, more firmly based on an objective view of . . . reality," meeting "new stress situations with an increased degree of . . . calm which is reflected in less physiological upset and more rapid physiological recovery from these frustrating situations," and so on?

It is not surprising, in view of the similarity in the aims of the therapist and the group leader, that those who have achieved some success in helping *individuals* become more emotionally mature, more socially effective, and more self-responsible have recently extended their activities and theories into work with *groups and organizations.*

This extension of psychotherapy into the field of leadership has been given even greater impetus by the almost phenomenal development of the field of group psychotherapy. The similarity between the role of the group therapist and the leader of other kinds of groups is even more marked, for it is in therapy groups that the role of the therapist is truly that of a group leader. J. W. Powell, in discussing the possibilities for a common ground between the group approaches of therapists, educators, and social workers, has this to say about the commonalities of groups:

> For, at bottom, the processes that underlie group operation are the same for all groups, whatever their differences in goal emphasis. Therapy, education, and social work groups all undertake to furnish a new and corrective *learning experience.* (69, p. 55)
>
> . . . To sum up, it appears that all three group disciplines — therapy, education, and social work — have in common an important element. . . . This is the element of emotional interlock, which arises from the personal investment of the members in their relationships. (69, p. 63)

This idea that the processes underlying group operation may be the same for all groups is closely related to the notion that any group experience might be made therapeutic for its members, if it is meant by therapy that individuals reorganize their system of attitudes and values toward self and others, become more self-responsible, develop more confidence, behave in a more socially integrative manner, and so on. In other words, might it not be fruitful to consider that there may be certain "therapeutic functions" that *any* group leader can perform? He does not necessarily have to be a "group therapist." Thus, a consultant for an industrial organization can perform functions that are socially therapeutic for the organization, as the Tavistock (London) social scientists have shown (42). A teacher can choose to use methods that will be therapeutic for her pupils, as has been demonstrated by Axline and Rogers (7), Anderson and Brewer (4), Baruch (9), and others. The leader of a youth conference can choose to create an atmosphere for the total conference community that will be therapeutic, as Shedlin (85) has demonstrated in his conduct of a conference for Christian and Jewish college students. These significant experiments seem to show rather conclusively that the leaders of many different kinds of groups can carry out their role in such a way that the group experience facilitates changes in the members — changes that have similar elements no matter what kind of group it is, and that may be described as therapeutic even though the group members' aims are something other than the receipt of "therapy."

SOME SUPPORT FOR GROUP-CENTERED LEADERSHIP FROM RESEARCH STUDIES

Although group-centered leadership has had its principal origins in group dynamics training and in the practice of psychotherapy in clinical settings, it has received considerable additional support from recent research studies on small group behavior. A surprising number of investigators have conducted research on the effects of group-centered leadership, although often other terms have been used to describe the role of the leader — such terms as student-centered teacher, nondirective leader, social therapist, group facilitator, participant leader, group integrator, permissive leader, and democratic leader. The findings from these various studies have not always been entirely consistent, and the researches have dealt only with a rather limited range of groups. Nevertheless, these studies are important because they demonstrate that group-centered leadership has actually been tried by many different investigators, its effects upon the group have been measured objectively, and the outcomes have often been positive and constructive.

The pioneering study of different leadership styles is the one carried out at the University of Iowa by Lewin, Lippitt, and White (50), to which reference was made in an earlier chapter. Their findings conclusively demonstrated that different modes of leadership, defined as autocratic, laissez faire, and democratic, produced measurably different "social climates" in the boys' groups. The democratic leader in this study was probably closest to our present conception of the group-centered leader, and the findings are clear that this type of leadership produced less aggressive behavior, less dependence upon the leader, more group initiative, and more task-oriented or productive behavior than the other two types of leadership. Furthermore, when the democratic leader temporarily left the group, there was little change in the work activities of the members, in contrast to the disruption that occurred when the other leaders left the groups. Some of the distinguishing characteristics of the democratic leader were as follows: (*a*) he allowed the group to make decisions, (*b*) he gave advice only when asked, and then in the form of alternatives, (*c*) he allowed members to choose their working partners, (*d*) he allowed the members to decide upon the division of responsibilities, (*e*) he tried to be a regular member of the group, at least in spirit.

Although the Iowa study of leadership has been criticized on the grounds that the three different leadership styles were merely role-played by the same leader, it still stands as a model for later research studies in the field of leadership.

Studies of Leadership in Educational Settings

Group-centered leadership is being tried out rather extensively in educational settings, largely because it is such a promising approach with small face-to-face groups such as are found in the classroom. There are some outstanding examples of attempts to evaluate group-centered teaching by research methods. Anderson (4) demonstrated the relationship between dominating behavior of teachers and aggressive and socially disintegrative behavior of students, while showing that less dominating teachers promoted constructive and socially integrative behavior. Flanders (25) found that directive, demanding, and teacher-supporting behavior elicited such student behavior as hostility toward self or teacher, withdrawal, apathy, aggressiveness, and emotional disintegration. Teachers who were less directive, more acceptant, and student-supporting elicited integrative behavior and less anxiety on the part of students.

The outcomes of the partially nondirective teaching methods utilized by Nathaniel Cantor (16) have been contrasted with the outcomes of a traditionally taught matched-control group in a study by Gross (37). The findings demonstrated the greater effectiveness of the nondirective methods with respect to the amount of self-insight acquired by the students. Faw (22) compared a "student-centered" class with both an instructor-centered class and one in which the instructor alternated the student-centered and instructor-centered focuses. The student-centered classes showed equal or better intellectual gains as measured by objective examination, and the students also felt they had received more social and emotional value in these classes. Interestingly enough, the students did not think they learned as much in the student-centered classes, even though objective scores on the examination indicated that they did.

Asch (6) reported a study of nondirective teaching in which the instructor permitted students to select their own goals, pick their reading material, and participate freely in class discussions. Students in this non-directively taught class showed more improvement in personal adjustment than did those in a traditionally taught control class. They also felt more satisfied with their experience. In contrast to the findings of Faw, however, the students in Asch's nondirective class did more poorly on objective and essay examinations than the students in the traditional classes. This result must be interpreted along with the fact that the students in the traditional classes were told that their examination grades would count against their final course grade, whereas the nondirectively taught students were told that the examinations would not count.

Bovard (15) demonstrated the superiority of groups with group-centered leadership over those with leader-centered leadership with respect to their power to alter the perceptions of individuals in the direction of a common group norm. One very significant finding from this study was that the individuals in the group-centered groups differed more widely in their *initial* opinions, attitudes, and judgments than the members of the leader-centered groups. Bovard interprets this findings as follows:

> The present experiment suggests that, paradoxically enough, the group having the widest initial latitude of behavior possible is also one in which more conformity can be obtained from the individual in those areas where the group demands it. And it suggests that

> the fundamental process in creation of such a permissive, yet basically powerful, group is verbal interaction among its members. (15, p. 404)

Support for such findings as reported by Bovard is contained in another experiment, one which attempted to compare "participatory" with "supervisory" leadership in their effects on group judgment. In this study the investigators, Preston and Heintz (70), demonstrated that group deliberation under participatory leaders — those who did not impose their own judgments on the group, but conducted free and open discussions and encouraged the group to assume responsibility for group decisions — was more likely to bring about changes in the members' opinions than deliberation under supervisory leaders. In addition, members under participatory leaders were generally better satisfied with the group decision than were members under supervisory leadership. These results were substantiated in a later experiment conducted by Hare (38), in which he too found that participatory leadership was more effective than supervisory leadership as a technique for changing opinions. As in the study by Preston and Heintz, the members of the participatory groups were generally more satisfied with the results of the group decision, although the differences were not statistically significant as they had been in the earlier study.

Another study that has relevance to the problem of leadership style is one conducted by Rehage (73). He compared two eighth-grade classes in social studies. In one class the teacher allowed the group to participate in setting goals and planning activities; in the other (the control group) this condition did not prevail. Although there was no highly significant difference between the two groups in the amount of subject matter learned, the participant group scored higher on a test of social beliefs than did the control group. Furthermore, the members of the participant class developed a greater degree of insight than did those in the control class, they developed more interest in cooperative effort, and they gave evidence that satisfactory working relationships could be fostered more easily in their group than in the control group.

Evidence that group-centered leadership leads to greater communication of feelings among group members comes from another experiment carried out by Bovard (14). Two matched groups were compared in their reactions to a human relations film, as revealed by their subsequent discussion of the film content. The group whose leader had been group-centered throughout its previous thirty-nine hours of meeting-time demonstrated superiority to the one whose leader had been leader-centered, with respect to three different criteria: (*a*) greater communication of feeling, (*b*) more identification with another person (the girl patient in the film), and (*c*) greater clinical insight into personality dynamics.

Some of the results of the studies cited above showing the superiority of group-centered leadership were not upheld in a study conducted by Wispe (94). His findings showed that college students actually preferred the "directive" classes to the nondirective or "permissive" classes. There was no significant difference between the directive and permissive classes with respect to scores obtained on the final examination by the *brighter* students. The *poorer* students, however, did better if they were in the directive classes. Finally, it was shown that students who did prefer the permissive classes "seemed to be more independent, less tense, and extra-punitive, while those who preferred more direction tended to be personally insecure, dependent, and intro-punitive." The findings from this study should not be interpreted as necessarily inconsistent with those from the other research studies in this area. It is highly probable that Wispe's students preferred the directive classes because they knew they would have to take a final examination based upon factual information. The investigator was not unaware of this possibility, for he writes:

> More material was, in fact, presented in the directive sections, and since the students' grades depended almost entirely on three examinations, we can understand why they violated the hedonic preference[1] and chose the directive sections instead of the more enjoyable permissive sections. (94, p. 169)

There is also reason to question the extent to which the permissive leaders were actually seen as permissive by the students, for, as reported in the study, they asked many questions of the students, "many of which were unanswered."

In summarizing the results of these eleven studies of leadership, all carried out in educational settings, it can be stated with a high degree of confidence that group-centered leadership in the classroom situation is not only possible but also beneficial in many respects. Students seem to learn as much or more factual information; they participate more; they enjoy the experience; and they acquire certain other important learnings, such as clinical insight, greater personal adjustment, socially integrative behavior, skills of working cooperatively with others, and the freedom to communicate their deeper feelings and attitudes. Finally, when these student groups are given certain tasks requiring group judgment or group decisions, those with group-centered leadership demonstrate more effectiveness in altering individual judgments in the direction of a group norm than do groups with directive or leader-centered leadership. The members of group-centered classes also are more satisfied with the decisions reached by their groups.

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[1] The students had indicated that they actually "enjoyed" the permissive sections more, though more students "preferred" the directive section.

This list of the demonstrated positive effects of group-centered leadership is an impressive one in view of the fact that most of these studies employed carefully matched control groups. True, there are some inconsistencies, but most of these can be explained, on theoretical grounds at least, by differences in some of the experimental situations — for example, differences in regard to the function of the final examination and the course grade.

Two important limitations of this group of studies should be pointed out. First, in most of the studies in which subject matter was used as a criterion, classes in psychology or "human relations" were employed. An argument could be advanced that group-centered methods are only applicable for this type of subject matter, and not for such subjects as mathematics or physics. Second, there was considerable variation in the actual behavior of the leaders in these different experiments. This leaves us uncertain as to which of the several different behavioral variables of leadership are most influential in producing the positive effects reported in these studies. Nevertheless, we can at least note that certain common elements appear in the leadership behavior described in most of these researches:

1. Participation of the group members is encouraged by the leader, although perhaps in different ways and with varying degrees of success.

2. The leader delegates responsibility to the group, although perhaps to varying degrees.
3. The leader does not impose a structure or a standard procedure, such as daily lectures.
4. The leader permits member-to-member communication and interaction.
5. The role of the leader to a great extent is determined by the needs of the group rather than fixed beforehand by the leader himself.

Absent from the above list are several important aspects of the leadership role which we should like very much to know about — namely, the leader's personal philosophy, his values, his attitudes toward people, his warmth and empathy, and finally the kind of verbal responses that characterize his interactions with the group members. Although this type of information is lacking, the eleven studies briefly reviewed here represent an impressive start in the scientific search for new leadership patterns in education.

Studies of Leadership in Organizational Settings

Several significant research studies carried out in large organizations, such as business and industrial concerns, also have relevance to our conception of group-centered leadership. Not only do these studies lend support to the hypothesis that group-centered leadership has positive effects on the functioning of groups, but also they demonstrate that such leadership has the potentialities for wide application. No longer can it be said that group-centered leadership is appropriate only to very limited situations, such as the classroom, small autonomous groups, or groups that do not have to produce or take action.

As part of a more extensive study of decision-making conferences in business, industry, and government, a group of psychologists at the University of Michigan (56) studied the relationship between the amount of procedural structuring and control provided by conference leaders and the satisfaction of the group members. They found that groups whose leaders exercised more control and behaved more like strong, formal leaders were actually more satisfied with their meetings than groups whose leaders exerted less control and whose procedures were less formal and orderly. The first explanation offered by the investigators was that in formal and "authoritarian" organizations the group members *expect* their superiors to exercise control and to play the role of a strong leader. On the other hand, the groups whose members were more dissatisfied and whose leaders exercised less control were *not* less productive than those whose members were more satisfied and whose leaders exercised more control. From this study it appears that leaders who are closer to the group-centered end of the continuum do not reduce the *productivity* of their groups but do reduce the *satisfaction* of the members.

Berkowitz (13) using the same data, arrived at a somewhat different conclusion. He, too, found a general expectation among members that the chairman should be the sole "major behavioral leader" and should exercise certain unique controlling functions. However, when he examined separately group situations in which the problem faced by the group was very urgent and those in which the problem was less urgent, striking differences in the satisfaction pattern of the members emerged.

> It will be recalled that cohesiveness and satisfaction tend to decrease the less differentiated the chairman is from the other group members, the more the members participate relative to the chairman, and the less the chairman controls the group process — but only when the group's problems are not too urgent. On the other hand, there are positive relationships with the permissiveness of the leader and the percentage of all solution-proposing done by the members when the groups' problems are relatively urgent. (13, p. 237)

Berkowitz concludes from this finding that the urgency of the group's problem probably affects the motivation of the members to participate actively:

> The group's motivation to reach a problem solution as quickly as possible thus appears to be stronger than its motivation to conform to the expectancies concerning role differentiation. Not only does leadership sharing fail to lessen cohesiveness and member satisfaction in the more urgent conditions, but the leader's permissiveness and the proposing of solutions by the members tends to make for more attractive (satisfying) group situations. (13, p. 237)

Once again, permissive leadership is shown to have no deterring effect on group productivity, and to have a significant positive effect on the satisfaction of group members, provided the problem facing the group is sufficiently urgent to call forth a desire to participate in the solution.

In a survey of the attitudes of company foremen and union stewards, Jacobson (39) found that, in departments where the foreman was active in involving his workers in decision-making and the union steward was not, the workers scored high on an index of favorable attitudes toward *management*. Where the opposite was true — where the steward encouraged worker participation in decision-making and the foreman did not — the workers had more favorable attitudes toward (identified with) *the union*. These results point up again the potential effect of allowing group members to participate in matters which concern them.

Katz, Maccoby, and Morse (46) studied differences in the patterns of supervision in both high-production groups and low-production groups engaged in essentially identical work in a large insurance company. Supervisors of the high-production groups differed significantly from supervisors of low-production groups in the following respects: (*a*) they supervised their workers less closely and, in turn, were supervised less closely by their own superiors; (*b*) they gave more time to problems of worker motivation and less to checking up on their workers; (*c*) they consulted their workers more and gave them more opportunity to participate in decisions.

The last two studies represent only a few of a large number being carried out by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan and focusing on the complex relationship between supervision and productivity. Although in general these studies point to the significance of worker participation as a determiner of high morale and productivity, there are undoubtedly other organizational factors influencing morale and productivity. These pioneering studies, however, have paved the way for the social scientist's search for a greater understanding of leadership patterns in large organizations and of the effects of different kinds of leadership upon the attitudes and behavior of group members.

THE NEED FOR A CASE-STUDY APPROACH

Although these research studies in educational and organizational settings lend strong support to the hypothesis that some form of group-centered leadership is a promising new approach both to teaching and to the management and supervision of groups, a different method of attack on the problem is also needed. For none of the research studies tell us in sufficient detail about the specific role behavior of the group-centered leader. From them we can obtain only a very general picture of how the group-centered leader operates in the situation. Furthermore, in the studies of leadership in industrial settings the investigators have been concerned mainly with leadership *as they found it* in these large organizations. Thus we cannot be sure just how "group-centered" such leaders are. True, the investigators discovered certain elements in these organizational leadership patterns which were then shown to be related to various criteria of group effectiveness — for example, encouraging the participation of group members, delegating authority to the group, and distributing (or sharing) certain leadership functions. These certainly are some of the elements that make up our conception of group-centered leadership. Yet there are many more critical elements of a role as complex as that of group leader. We would like to know more about how a group-centered leader plans for his meetings with the group, how he begins a meeting, how he handles problems that commonly arise in groups, how he responds to the communications of group members, and so on. It would also be important for us to know what it takes to be a group-centered leader in the way of values or of attitudes toward people. In short, our understanding of group-centered leadership can be enriched through an examination of how the group-centered leader gets to be such a leader, how he performs in his role, and how group members react to his role.

From an inspection of the recent literature on group leadership, it can be seen that investigators are using the same terms (for example, "group-centered leadership") to stand for quite different leader roles. In one experiment the leader might select the goals for his groups, while in another he might allow the group to decide upon its goals, and yet both leaders are termed "group-centered." It is also apparent, as we have already pointed out, that investigators are using different terms to stand for some of the same kinds of leader behavior. Thus a leader who encourages free discussion through his avoidance of evaluating and judging members' contributions is called a "permissive" leader in one study and a "participant" leader in another. Although such lack of standardization of terminology cannot be avoided entirely in a field that is new and developing, we can minimize a great deal of confusion by careful attention to the specific behaviors of the leaders we study. Furthermore, some of the barriers to communication caused by differences in terminology might be reduced if investigators gave us their models for group-centered leadership.

This is essentially the aim of the remaining chapters of this book. We propose to offer a model, or an example, of group-centered leadership, taken from two different studies. This model is not presented with the idea that our particular definition of a group-centered leader is the best or the most effective. Rather, the model is offered as a possible standard against which other descriptions of leadership can be measured and compared.

Parts Two and Three, then, will be devoted to two case studies in which the principal objectives were to construct a model of group-centered leadership, to try out the model in a real-life situation, and to evaluate some of the effects of this leadership approach upon the group. The setting for the first study (Part Two) was a Summer Workshop conducted on the campus of the University of Chicago; the setting for the second (Part Three) was an industrial organization.

Part Two

CASE STUDY: THE WORKSHOP EXPERIMENT

Because rigorous experimentation and quantitative measurement have acquired high prestige in the physical sciences, we are often inclined to think that these are the only legitimate tools of social science. However, not only do some well-developed sciences employ methods other than rigorous experimentation, but in a relatively undeveloped area of science, such as human relations, heavy reliance must be placed on observation and accurate description of behavioral events. Observation and description have been utilized extensively in our study of group-centered leadership, because the principal objective was to provide a descriptive model of a unique approach to leadership. While recognizing the necessity for more rigorous testing of specific hypotheses relating to group-centered leadership, for the present we have formulated a more limited objective — namely, to try to present an adequate description of what group-centered leadership is.

This description of group-centered leadership is based on the experiences of a Summer Workshop at the University of Chicago. It has been constructed chiefly out of numerous observations of the Workshop leaders as they were attempting a new leadership approach and of the delegates who were experiencing how it felt to be members of a group led in this manner. The observations of leaders and of group members were collected in a variety of ways: daily interviews, personal diaries, minutes of meetings, and so on. These methods of course involved the subjective impressions and perceptions of the participants in the Workshop, rather than objective measures or the systematic observations of unbiased external observers. However, our limited goal was to focus on how group-centered leadership felt to the participants as they were experiencing it, either as leaders or as group members.

These subjective methods have been supplemented by some that are more objective. Thus an attempt was made to utilize some quantitative measures of the attitudes and values of the leaders and delegates in the Workshop. These methods add to the more global description of group-centered leadership, but they do not match the more subjective methods in richness of data.

It might be said also that the Workshop suffers the limitation of having dealt with the "single case." In other words, this is a report of only one attempt to try out group-centered leadership with a group. It is a case study in which we rely on a *time sequence analysis* rather than on *case comparison.* Although we have no way of determining whether the findings from this study are unique to this particular group situation, we have been able to observe changes in the same group over a period of time. If we succeed in stimulating the interest of social scientists through our description of this single case, perhaps future studies will permit comparison of our group with others.

The Workshop study actually began when the instructional staff started to plan together several months prior to the Workshop. Thus we were able to make a kind of case study of what is involved in the preparation for group-centered leadership, and of how leaders have to grapple with certain issues before they can accept group-centered leadership. The problems encountered in formulating the objectives and the plans are described in Chapters 6 and 7. The role of the group-centered leader is described in Chapter 8, followed in Chapter 9 by an account of the initial impact of his role on the Workshop group. Chapter 10 takes up the process of change that the group underwent during the Workshop period. We attempt to analyze some of the most significant aspects of the Workshop group's development, as it learned to free itself from its initial dependence on the leaders and as it gradually acquired skills of making decisions and taking action. Finally, in Chapter 11, we describe the outcomes of our attempts to measure objectively certain changes in the group members which were predicted beforehand from the theory of group-centered leadership. This assessment of changes in the members includes a follow-up study made six months after the Workshop for the purpose of determining some of the more long-range effects of the Workshop as indicated by changes in the delegates' behavior in their back-home situations.

Thus the Workshop study provides a working model for group-centered leadership, fashioned partly out of the case-study data, partly out of more objective and quantitative data. The leader is described during the period of his learning to adopt and accept the new approach, during the stage of planning his approach to the group, during the initial contact with the group, and during the later stages in which the group is developing into a self-directing and self-responsible decision-making body. Finally, the study presents some evidence as to the outcomes or effects of this type of leadership on both the leaders and the members of the group.

The Plan of the Workshop Experiment

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THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EXPERIMENT

The opportunity to experiment with group-centered leadership in a learning situation came about in the summer of 1950, when a Workshop was organized at the University of Chicago to provide training in leadership for persons in positions of responsibility in churches and other religious organizations. As originally conceived, the Workshop was intended primarily as a three weeks' training experience for persons who wished to increase their knowledge of group processes and their skills of leadership. Early in the planning, however, the six staff leaders (of whom the writer was one) began to develop an interest in trying to carry out a completely group-centered approach in the leadership of the Workshop itself. From this interest there later emerged the plan to make a case study of this experience and to evaluate the outcomes of our leadership approach.

While the staff generally recognized the significance of other leadership training programs in this country and fully appreciated the contributions made by leaders in adult education, social psychology, and group work, nevertheless there existed within the staff varying degrees of dissatisfaction with those other training programs. We felt that many of the inadequacies of present-day leadership training were due to the kind of leadership provided the trainees during the training experience itself. We were convinced that the very methods of leadership employed by the trainers of leaders have an important effect on what is learned by the trainees. It seemed from our experience that people lead as they themselves have been led. Consequently, it was a challenge to the Workshop staff to consider utilizing a different approach to leadership in conducting the training program.

However, the definition of our task gradually broadened as we began to ask ourselves certain basic questions, such as:

1. What kind of leadership are we prepared to provide the Workshop itself?
2. Are we as a staff of leaders in agreement as to the kind of leadership we should provide the Workshop?
3. What will be the effect on the Workshop if the staff leaders do not share a common position with regard to a leadership approach?
4. If the task is to create a situation conducive to the most efficient learning on the part of the delegates, what kind of staff leadership will most effectively accomplish this task?
5. How will we know whether we have succeeded or failed in providing an atmosphere conducive to change or re-education?

Through puzzling over such questions as these the staff eventually arrived at a plan involving three principal objectives:

1. To work out together a definition of the role of a group-centered leader which would be consistent with a positive philosophy about the nature of man and our theory of the wisdom of the group. Our task would be to translate our philosophy and theories into a specific definition of the role required of a leader to implement the philosophy and theory. This meant that we would have to devote considerable time to planning precisely how we were going to behave as leaders of the Workshop.
2. To observe and record the impact of our leadership on the Workshop group and the subsequent process of group development.

Our task would be to devise methods of studying what happened to the Workshop group in response to the unique role we would play as leaders.

3. To evaluate the effects upon the group of an experience with group-centered leadership. We wanted to know if such an experience would produce changes in the members' attitudes and behavior. Would the delegates be different after the Workshop, and, if so, in what ways?

METHODS EMPLOYED TO ACCOMPLISH THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Each of the above objectives called for the use of different methods. Our task was to select those methods which seemed most appropriate for each objective, yet our selection was often influenced by certain practical considerations and limits upon our time and resources. Early in the planning stage it became quite clear that we could not hope to study more than a limited number of the many variables present in such a complex situation as the one we were creating. We also recognized the desirability of using objective methods, where possible, yet not always did we have the time or the resources for devising precise objective methods. In the end we had to settle for a limited use of objective methods, relying heavily on methods that are usually considered "subjective," "clinical," and "global." To an extent this was justified, since many of the phenomena we were interested in were those requiring just such methods for their study. That is to say, we recognized that we would be dealing with gross behavior, as, for example, certain changes in the total group organization; we were aware that we would have to rely heavily on subjective data, as, for example, the delegates' own perception of themselves and the group. Our task seemed to require a kind of case study of a group experience rather than a controlled experiment. We wanted to capture and record the general flavor of this experience, rather than perform a careful and precise analysis of any single aspect of it. Our methods needed to be such as to preserve the complexity of the actual human situation we would be observing.

Methods of Studying the Staff's Planning and Preparation

Few studies of leadership have paid sufficient attention to the complex process by which leaders plan and prepare themselves for the role they are to carry out in the group situation. Most studies begin with a description or analysis of the behavior of the leader only *after* he starts his interaction with the group, leaving us in the dark as to what went on *before*. Yet, if we are to understand the dynamics of leadership, this period *before* is of vital importance. We need to know something about the process through which the leader arrives at decisions about the kind of role he is to play in the group and acquires the attitudes that permit him to act in certain ways and not in others. Many important questions need asking in regard to this crucial period:

1. Why does a leader choose one approach to leadership rather than another?
2. What is the function of the leader's own philosophy in his choice of a particular approach?
3. What are the resistances experienced by a leader as he tries to adopt new patterns of leadership behavior?
4. What problems or issues have to be faced by a leader in preparing himself for a particular role?
5. How are a leader's feelings about himself — his status, his power, his security — involved in the process of deciding what role he will play in the position of leader?

It occurred to the Workshop staff leaders that we might make a contribution to the understanding of leadership by intensively studying ourselves during the pre-Workshop period as we experienced the process of choosing our leadership approach and working out the implementation of this approach. We decided to begin our case study of the Workshop at the point where we as leaders came together to plan it. This turned out to be a sound decision, in the judgment of the staff, because the data we collected during this period provided a wealth of fruitful ideas and insights about the dynamics of our leadership role.

Following is a brief description of the kinds of data collected during this period of planning:

1. *Minutes of Staff Meetings.* The task of keeping staff minutes was rotated among us. The minutes contained summaries of our discussions on important issues and notations of decisions made by the group. Meetings usually lasted for three to four hours. There were six such staff meetings, the first occurring about six months before the beginning of the Workshop.
2. *Staff Journals.* It was decided that each staff member would try to keep a personal journal of each staff meeting, giving his personal reactions and interpretations of the discussions. These journals were seen as supplementing the staff meeting minutes in that they would contain more of the introspective and subjective reactions of each staff member — a personal record of what was going on in his mind.
3. *Tape Recordings of Staff Meetings.* From time to time decisions were made to record the staff discussions, usually when we felt that our discussion was centering on very fundamental problems.
4. *Evaluation Periods.* Sometimes during the staff meetings the group would decide to stop for a look at itself, at which time we would try to conceptualize and evaluate our own group processes. Often these self-observation discussions provided insights which later influenced the way in which we were to formulate our own approach to the leadership of the Workshop.

Not all of these materials have been utilized directly. Nevertheless, portions of the data are reported in Chapter 7 to illustrate some of the principal problems involved in the process of planning to carry out a group-centered leadership approach.

METHODS OF STUDYING THE PROCESS OF GROUP DEVELOPMENT

To accomplish the objective of studying the process of development in the Workshop group, four different methods were employed.

Personal Journals of Staff Leaders. The practice of having the leaders write a personal journal or diary after each meeting was continued during the Workshop. Each staff leader agreed to record his observations and interpretations at the end of each day. These observations were to be organized under two different catagories: (*a*) "What is happening to the Workshop," and (*b*) "What is happening to me." Usually these journals were dictated by the staff leaders and later transcribed by typists, so that the leaders could give extensive reports with a minimum expenditure of time and effort. The average length of these journals was from two to three single-spaced typewritten pages. Occasionally a leader missed writing a report for a day, but in general the task was completed regularly and carefully. It was agreed that the journals would not be read until after the Workshop, so that we would not be influenced by what the other leaders were observing and recording.

Personal Journals of Delegates. Five delegates volunteered to write personal journals or diaries at the end of each day. They, too, were instructed to organize their comments and interpretations under "What is happening to the Workshop" and "What is happening to me." The delegates were not given the opportunity to dictate their journals and thus had to write them in longhand or type them. This was probably one factor that contributed to the shorter length of the delegates' journals. Theirs averaged from one to two typewritten pages per day. With few exceptions delegates submitted a journal for each day of the Workshop. Some of the daily entries in the delegate journals focused too much on specific happenings of the day ("Today we met in a subgroup and discussed back-home problems") rather than on the delegates' personal analysis and reaction to the day's happenings ("Today I felt much more free to participate and found my ideas were well received"). In general, however, these records were quite useful and were extensively used along with the staff journals in the subsequent analysis of the group's development. These data have been utilized primarily in Chapters 8 and 9 as evidence of both the initial impact of group-centered leadership on the group and also the later process of the group's development.

Interviews with Delegates. Five delegates volunteered to be interviewed each day by one of the staff leaders. This method was adopted in the hope of obtaining data from the delegates that would be richer and more personal than those provided by the daily journals. Each interview lasted approximately one-half hour, and all were conducted nondirectively by the staff — that is, except for the initial instructions to the delegates that they talk about what they felt was happening to them and to the Workshop group, the interviewers avoided asking questions or guiding the discussion or evaluating the statements of the delegate. The transcribed protocols attest to the almost complete lack of interference or directiveness on the part of the staff interviewers. The interviews provided a wealth of significant material which has been used extensively throughout this report of the Workshop study, but chiefly in Chapters 8 and 9. All the interviews were recorded and later transcribed.

Not only did the interviews provide valuable information which increased our understanding of the impact of our leadership and of the changes that occurred in the delegates' attitudes and behavior, but they were apparently very valuable for the delegates who participated. One would expect several possible values: the delegates would benefit from the therapeutic effect of discussing their personal feelings in an accepting climate, they would clarify their own thinking about their roles in the Workshop and be helped in becoming more effective members, and they would reinforce the learnings derived from the Workshop discussions simply because they could talk about them in the interviews. There was evidence that all three of these gains resulted from the interviews. Several of the delegates explicitly stated outside the interview situation that they had profited in these ways, and the transcriptions of the interviews also contained frequent comments to this effect. The staff leaders agreed that the interviews were valuable not only as a research method but also as a training method by which learning on the part of the delegates was facilitated and enriched.

Records of Functions. The research plan for the Workshop called for another type of data from the delegates. Unlike the personal journals and the interviews, which were for the purpose of allowing the staff to see the Workshop through the eyes of the delegates and which left the delegates free to report whatever they saw, the "Records of Functions" were designed to test a particular hypothesis formulated by the staff before the Workshop began.

In line with our theory in which the "effective group" is defined as one in which the various required "functions of leadership" are distributed throughout the group rather than centered entirely in the leader, the following hypothesis was formulated:

> One of the effects of group-centered leadership upon the Workshop group will be an increase in the number of functions carried out by the delegates and a corresponding decrease or lack of change in the number carried out by the leaders.

In order to test this hypothesis eight volunteers were asked to submit at the end of each day a list of all of the specific volunteer activities in which they engaged during the various meetings of the Workshop. In addition, all five of the staff agreed to submit a similar list of their volunteer activities. The research plan called for collecting the records, and then charting weekly the number of activities performed by delegates as against those performed by the staff. The hypothesis would be supported if the delegates' activities increased in number and the leaders' decreased or remained at the same frequency level.

The data obtained from this method were disappointing for two reasons. First, too few daily reports were submitted. The delegates particularly were remiss in turning in their reports, but even some of the staff leaders failed to turn in reports during the third week. Second, some of the delegates misinterpreted the directions, so that some of the activities they reported were not the kinds of activities called for by the study; e.g., one delegate listed some activities for which he did not specially volunteer, such as "attended Workshop group meeting." It is also posible that as the delegates' motivation waned during the last few days they tended more to omit listing a number of activities in which they actually did engage. Although results of this study are reported in Chapter 9, there is some reason to question their validity.

Methods of Measuring Outcomes of the Workshop

The third principal objective of the Workshop staff was to evaluate certain outcomes of the Workshop experience. A distinction was made between the *process* of group development and the *outcomes* of the group experience. Outcomes refer to those changes that resulted from the *total* Workshop experience. The staff's intention was to learn something about the nature and extent of the changes that occurred as a result of an experience in a group in which the leaders were group-centered in their approach. To accomplish this the staff utilized two different methods.

The Follow-up Questionnaire. A questionnaire was sent to all the delegates approximately six months after the end of the Workshop. Its purposes were: (*a*) to determine how the delegates evaluated the Workshop experience in retrospect; (*b*) to determine which aspects of the experience were most and least rewarding to the delegates; (*c*) to determine what kinds of behavioral effects the delegates attributed to the Workshop; and (*d*) to obtain from the delegates descriptions of critical incidents in which they had tried to apply some of their learnings from the Workshop to group situations in which they were the leaders.

Almost sixty per cent of the delegates (fifteen out of twenty-six) returned the completed questionnaire, thus introducing the possibility of a sampling bias — that is, it is possible that those returning the questionnaire differed in some important respect from those who did not. If those who responded happened to be the delegates who benefited most from the Workshop experience, the results obtained from the questionnaire would of course be biased in the direction of indicating positive and favorable effects. The fact that the delegates were asked not to sign their names to the questionnaire possibly minimized the chances that only the benefited delegates responded. Nevertheless, the evaluation of the questionnaire data must take into account the fact that the information was derived from only sixty per cent of the delegate population.

All the returned questionnaires were filled out completely, and unusually full answers were given to all the questions. The information derived from the questionnaire will be summarized in Chapter 11.

The Leadership and Membership Q-Sorts. If the theory underlying group-centered leadership is sound, one would expect that this type of leadership in a learning group would facilitate the process by which the group members unlearn some things and learn others. As indicated previously, group-centered leadership, in theory at least, fosters participation and creates a nonthreatening atmosphere in which members feel it is safe to change. It was logical, then, for the staff to predict that, if this type of leadership were provided for a group interested in learning about group behavior and leadership, the members of that group at the end of the experience should show signs of having changed with respect to their attitudes and behavior as both leaders and group members.

But how were we to measure these changes? We discarded on several grounds the idea of using the traditional examination which measures how much information and knowledge students acquire. The acquisition of *knowledge about* groups and leadership, we felt certain, was quite different from the acquisition of the *attitudes and skills* of leadership and membership roles. Moreover, the idea of such an examination seemed incompatible with the kind of atmosphere the staff wished to create — one in which each member would feel free to learn whatever he wanted. In other words, there would be no common subject matter upon which to examine the Workshop members.

The best test of how much the members learned would be some direct and objective measure of changes in their leadership and membership *behavior* in back-home situations. Such procedures, however, were not feasible in view of limitations of time and resources. Consequently, some measure of change was needed which would not require extensive follow-up observation. One solution was to ask the delegates themselves to report later on their back-home experiences. This was accomplished through a Follow-up Questionnaire.

But this questionnaire still would not furnish the kind of *objective* evidence we needed for determining the amount and kind of learning resulting from the Workshop. Consequently we began to consider how change could be more objectively measured. The model of the Q-sort technique, devised by Stephenson (89) and utilized recently in measuring outcomes of individual psychotherapy (35, 79), was adopted for this purpose. This technique is extremely useful for obtaining quantitative comparisons of a person's attitudes and behavior at different times and under different conditions. It was assumed that one of the outcomes of the Workshop would be a change in the delegates' attitudes and behavior as group *leaders*, and another a change in their attitudes and behavior as group *members*. Consequently, two instruments were devised, a Leadership Q-sort and a Membership Q-sort. These two instruments provided quantitative self-description of the attitudes and behavior of the delegates in these two kinds of roles.

The Leadership Q-sort instrument consisted of eighty-four brief statements, each written on a separate card, and each describing either an attitude (or value) or a specific behavioral pattern of a theoretical leader, as in the following examples:

> Feels the group has the capacity to solve its own problems, provided each member feels free to give of himself. (Attitude or Value)
>
> Helps group to relate comments of group members to the central stream of thought of the group. (Behavior)

Half of the eighty-four cards contained statements that were intended to be consistent with the characteristics of an effective leader. The other half contained statements that would be inconsistent with effective leadership.

The Membership Q-sort instrument similarly consisted of eighty-four statements, each describing some characteristic of a theoretical group member. Again, half of the statements were deliberately formulated as being consistent, the other half as being inconsistent, with the attitudes and behavior of an effective member.

Descriptions were obtained from a number of the delegates at three different times: before the Workshop began, immediately after it ended, and again six months later. This procedure made it possible to obtain a measure of the *changes* that might occur as a result of the Workshop experience. Ten delegates were needed, and ten volunteered.

The Q-sort technique lends itself to obtaining measures of how people would like to feel and behave, as well as of how they actually do feel and behave. Since one appropriate criterion of the effect of the Workshop might be changes in the delegates' conceptions of *ideal* leadership and membership roles, it was decided to make further use of the Q-sorts to measure such changes. Accordingly, the ten delegates who volunteered to describe their *actual* attitudes and behavior as leaders and members were asked also to describe by means of the Q-sorts their conceptions of the *ideal* leader and member. Conceivably, some of the delegates might not change their own attitudes and behavior, yet they might gain a new conception of ideal attitudes and behavior in these two roles.

In general, the procedure for obtaining ideal descriptions was the same as for the actual descriptions, except that the ten delegates were asked to describe the ideal leader and the ideal member only twice — before and immediately after the Workshop.

There were several other features of the overall design that will be mentioned only briefly at this point. The staff leaders themselves provided Q-sort descriptions before and after the Workshop. The specific reasons for obtaining staff sorts will be made apparent later as we present some of the findings from this portion of the experiment. Finally, a control group feature was added to the experiment. This involved administering the Q-sorts to ten members of another group, chosen because of certain similarities between the purposes of that group and the Workshop and between the members of this group and the Workshop.

From the preceding description of the Q-sort phase of the research, it will be seen that many different indices of change might be computed from the rather complex and extensive measurements. Actually the staff, prior to the Workshop, formulated a number of very specific hypotheses in which predictions were made as to changes that would occur in the relationships between certain of these variables. These hypotheses will be discussed in a later chapter, along with the findings from the Q-sort analysis.

Problems in Planning a Group-Centered Approach

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The leader who decides to experiment with a group-centered approach will discover that complex problems are involved in planning this new leadership approach. Changing his style of leadership will not be easy. He quickly learns that a group-centered approach requires a different set of attitudes and values. Long before he actually faces a group, the leader who is considering group-centered leadership must face the problem of his own attitudes and values; for to accept this approach to leadership, even in theory, usually requires a considerable reorganization of a leader's basic beliefs.

The records of the pre-Workshop meetings of the staff leaders provide ample evidence of the difficulties involved in adopting attitudes consistent with group-centered leadership. Not all of the Workshop staff leaders were convinced that a group-centered approach would be effective, even though all of us had committed ourselves to trying it with the Workshop. Nor did the staff clearly understand what a group-centered approach would mean in terms of specific behavior. Ours was only a hazy notion that such an approach would be different from the traditional leadership of a training group, but how different and in what specific ways we did not discover until we began to plan for the Workshop.

This chapter is an attempt to reproduce for the reader certain aspects of the staff's experience during the planning stage when the theory of group-centered leadership was actually being translated into attitudes and behaviors.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY

One of the first issues that emerged when the Workshop staff began to plan was the knotty problem of responsibility. To what extent is the leader willing to delegate responsibility to the group? Does not a leader have a special responsibility for his group? This is the question most frequently raised by leaders confronted with the group-centered point of view. They often see in this type of leadership a denial of the responsibility for others which leaders so often feel. For them, group-centered leadership is often equated with a "laissez-faire" philosophy, and thus they perceive it as a real threat to the expression of their need to take responsibility for others.

To whom is a leader responsible? In groups established along authoritarian lines, the leaders are usually "responsible to" someone higher in the pyramid of authority. In a sense, such leaders are *made* to feel responsible to those with more authority. Often leaders assume responsibility for their group out of a more general feeling of social, moral, or ethical responsibility, much as a father feels responsible for his children.

But the term "responsibility" has no more than a very abstract meaning, unless we examine exactly *what* it is that leaders feel responsible for. Should a leader feel responsible for the goals of his group? Should he feel responsible for what the group produces or creates? For how the group operates? For what the group learns? For changes the group undergoes? To be sure, leaders vary in the extent to which they assume responsibility for their groups. How much responsibility should the leader assume? Should there be limits to this responsibility? What is the effect upon a group when the leader assumes a great deal of responsibility? Only a little responsibility? These are some of the perplexing problems that leaders face.

As we began to plan for the Workshop training experience, we faced these very problems. At first we fell into the usual pattern of acting in terms of a felt responsibility as teachers, experts, and educators. We began to define our objectives, to set down the aims for the Workshop, to list what we hoped the delegates would learn. This led to some initial attempts to plan a curriculum. In the midst of this planning, however, we became uneasy about the role we were assuming. Why were we taking responsibility for deciding what the delegates should learn? Did we *really* know what would be best for them? Did we *actually* possess enough information to diagnose their needs and to decide what they might want to learn? Were we not thinking more in terms of what we felt they *ought* to learn? Could we justify such an assumption of responsibility for the lives of others?

Some excerpts from the rather extensive minutes of an early planning meeting of the staff illustrate the struggles which we were experiencing over the problem of responsibility:

> It was only as the staff began to plan how to implement the basic objectives that some disagreements arose. One of the first issues which the group had to face as a result of some disagreement about implementation of their objectives was that of the extent to which the delegates themselves should participate in even the actual planning of the Workshop. The question was asked as to how much of a deterrent to a group's development toward independence is pre-planning by the staff members before the delegates convene. Does a group need some structure to begin with? Does lack of structure cause insecurity and frustration? Discussion of some of these questions led ultimately to the question of to what extent do the ends (democratic group leadership) justify the means (authoritative pre-planning and structuring by the staff).

At this early meeting there were the first faint rumblings of a dissatisfaction with the traditional kind of curriculum-planning or goal-setting done by educators and trainers. In subsequent meetings, we explored further the possibility of giving much more than the usual responsibility to the group. The previous experience of some of the staff with psychotherapy seemed to indicate that when the psychotherapist gives full responsibility to his client it facilitates the client's growth toward independence and self-responsibility. So why not consider giving groups full responsibility? One of the staff recorded this problem in his personal diary:

> Those of us with experience in psychotherapy began to ask ourselves why in client-centered therapy we begin right from the very start of therapy allowing the client to take a self-responsible role and refusing to take over responsibility for the conduct of the interviews. . . . In other words, practice in independence comes at the very beginning of therapy, and taking responsibility away from the client seems to deter therapeutic progress. What then should be the role of the group leader? Should he attempt to behave much like a client-centered therapist? Should we allow the delegates to the Workshop to take responsibility right from the start? . . . This problem brought the staff to the question of whether or not the principles derived from the practice of individual therapy are applicable to group situations. Perhaps this therapist role is all right for a therapy group but is not the best role for the leader of other kinds of groups.

What was happening in these early staff meetings was that our initial impetus to begin planning the Workshop and to assume the traditional responsibilities of leadership was being replaced by a desire to formulate a consistent theoretical position into which we could fit the act of planning itself. This proved a difficult task, for each of the leaders tended to cling to traditional notions about responsibility. In the diary written by one of the staff during this pre-Workshop period we find the following statements:

> I think my own uncertainty in this matter grows out of countless experiences where I was responsible and yet wished to follow this kind of group-centered approach. Within the church situation there are many times when it has seemed to me that unless I did take and use some of that responsibility, the group or the situation would have completely collapsed. Now maybe in the long run that's precisely what should have happened in order that long-range growth could have been achieved. But on the other hand, a professional person, in a sense, is employed and therefore given this responsibility. I was caught on the horns of a dilemma.

This excerpt reflects the sharp ambivalence of the Workshop leaders, the kind of dual feeling that many other group leaders have experienced. They want to trust the group with more responsibility, yet they fear the group will not assume it and they will be blamed for the group's failure. Another Workshop leader clearly expressed this fear in his diary when he wrote:

> Maybe I'm expressing a basic insecurity on my part, yet somehow the people coming as delegates have already given us some responsibility, on the basis of our experiences, to plan for them. They have chosen us rather than hundreds of other Workshops, and therefore they have delegated to us some responsibility to prepare a situation wherein they can learn. . . . I think part of my own insecurity grows out of a fear that we will fall, not at the authoritarian end of the scale, but rather will appear in the minds of the delegates to have fallen at the laissez-faire end of the scale.

This Workshop leader is expressing the common fear of many leaders as they approach a new group — a fear that the group members will judge them weak, passive, or indifferent if they demonstrate a tendency to place responsibility with the group.

Whether or not a leader is willing to have responsibility reside with the total group rather than within himself seems dependent on how much he himself experiences a need to change the group and on how much he doubts the group's ability to arrive at sound decisions or to select desirable courses of action.

THE NEED TO CHANGE OTHERS

It may well be that the need to change others is a universal one. To some degree it exists within each of us, molded as we are by our particular culture. When the need is exaggerated it is clearly recognized, as in the behavior of a "social reformer," a neighborhood busybody, a dominating parent, an extremely authoritarian business executive, or a political dictator. In such people, the need is readily observable and is rated by others as highly undesirable. Social science already has made considerable progress in defining and understanding the "authoritarian personality," the pathological power-seeker, the dominative teacher, the fascist agitator. From recent studies of persons in whom the power to dominate and control others verges on the pathological, it is evident that such tendencies are deeply rooted in the basic personality structure of the individual. The findings from these studies are beginning to fit into a fairly consistent picture in which a pathological need to change or manipulate others stems from basic feelings of inadequacy, self-condemnation, and lack of worth. The authoritarian feels powerless himself. As Erich Fromm has stated:

> . . . in a psychological sense, the lust for power is not rooted in strength, but in weakness. It is the expression of the inability of the individual self to stand alone and live. It is the desperate attempt to gain secondary strength where genuine strength is lacking. (29, p. 162)

Further evidence of this relationship between a person's attitude toward himself and his need to change others can be found in the study by Sheerer (86) of the effects of client-centered psychotherapy on clients' attitudes toward others. Sheerer found that in successful therapy, attitudes expressed by the client that were operationally defined as indicating "acceptance of self" increased during therapy. The client at the conclusion of therapy thus tends more to perceive himself as a person of worth, worthy of respect rather than condemnation; he tends to feel equal *as a person* to others; he tends to act more on the basis of his own values and standards rather than those of others; he tends more to accept the facts of his own experience rather than deny them in favor of the perceptions of others. Accompanying this increase in acceptance of and respect for *self* was an increase in acceptance of and respect for *others*. According to Sheerer's definition, acceptance of others means that the individual does not reject, hate, or dislike those whose values or behavior are different from his own; he does not deny the worth of others; *he does not dominate or assume responsibility for others;* and he does not condemn others or feel defensive when they react unfavorably toward him or other persons. Although this study was based on the recorded interviews of only a small number of clients, it supports the theory that individuals who cannot accept others as they are may harbor a basic dislike and distrust of themselves.

It thus appears that some progress has been made toward finding a theoretical basis for the tendency to change others, although such theories as we have are not yet conclusively verified by research. The common element in these theories is the relationship between lack of acceptance of self and inability to accept others as they are.

It can be understood, then, why it is difficult for some leaders to accept an approach to group leadership which stresses the importance of accepting others as persons, not as objects to be changed or manipulated. The leader with needs to manipulate others finds himself face to face with some knotty philosophical problems if he seriously attempts to adopt a group-centered approach to leadership. The group-centered leader firmly believes in the capacity of another to change, but he is also firm in the belief that the change must be in the direction of the other person's choosing — it must be on his own terms, not the leader's. The group-centered leader has grown to trust and rely upon the judgment of the other person with respect to how he will change. He has learned that when he has been able to convey to members of a group this basic trust in their ability to determine the nature and direction of their change and development, the group invariably moves in a direction that is ultimately satisfying to its members and beneficial to the group as a whole.

Distrust of the Group's Capacity

The tendency to assume responsibility for a group is also related to a lack of faith in the group's ability to arrive at a desirable decision or course of action. Many people find it both provocative and disconcerting that the group-centered point of view makes such claims for the potentialities of a group for sound decisions and appropriate behavior. They also challenge such blind faith by bringing up examples of groups they have known which made inappropriate or undesirable decisions when given the responsibility for their own destiny. A teacher remembers how he once allowed his Civics class to spend their hour as they chose — and how the hour ended in a raucous brawl. A supervisor in an industrial organization says it is ridiculous to expect industrial workers to arrive at sound decisions — on the average they are not very intelligent and have had very little education. A political or community leader points to the general apathy of the citizens and cites numerous examples of their failure to participate when given the chance to act on community problems.

Such attitudes of skepticism and distrust, based as they are on the previous experiences of different kinds of leaders, are real barriers to the acceptance of a point of view which emphasizes the more positive and constructive potentialities of group members. Leaders who have had such experiences are seldom convinced when told in effect by the group-centered proponent, "Forget these experiences and try another approach with which I have had some success in helping groups become self-responsible." Yet in the long run there is little else that the group-centered proponent can say. He is aware, of course, that many leaders who claim to have tried giving responsibility to their groups have given only a limited responsibility and have placed only a limited trust in the group. He also knows from his own experience that a group that is used to depending on the more traditional kind of leadership often takes a long time to unlearn old patterns of dependent behavior and learn new patterns of self-responsibility and self-determination. It is axiomatic to the group-centered leader that *democratic membership*, as well as democratic leadership, must be learned and that often the learning process is slow. Consequently, the group-centered leader knows no other way to discover whether a group can be trusted *except to trust it* — and patiently maintain this trust long enough for the group to learn to make "sound" decisions.

Such was the decision eventually made by the Workshop leaders, but only after they had together worked through many of the issues discussed in the previous paragraphs. The staff formulated the hypothesis that the delegates coming to the Workshop could and would assume full responsibility for their own curriculum, for their own social and recreational life, for their own program of study, and for their own procedures of operating as a productive group. Many of the earlier doubts of some of the staff leaders persisted, and these leaders remained skeptical right up to the start of the Workshop. Yet the significant fact was that this group of leaders did arrive at a common philosophy. This important decision was documented in the minutes of one of the pre-Workshop staff meetings:

> Intellectually, at least, we as a group seem to accept the idea that the pre-selection of goals for the Workshop is inconsistent with our general theoretical and philosophical positions. If a group is going to accept certain goals for itself and behave in terms of those goals, it probably must have a hand in their selection. . . . The goals selected by the group will be those which are most comfortable for

> the group and more comfortable with the needs of its members, provided the group is free from threat. . . . If we actually accepted this hypothesis, would it not mean then that if our delegates were allowed from the very outset to plan how they would like to operate a workshop, they would arrive at a mode of operation that would be superior to any mode of operation pre-selected by the leaders. . . . Here, then, would be an opportunity for them to experience first-hand, at the very beginning of the Workshop, real self-responsible behavior.

Should the Group Be Eased into Self-Responsibility?

The usual approach advocated by the various schools of "democratic" leadership is for the leader to assume responsibility for conducting the early meetings of the group, hoping then to transfer this responsibility to the group when it reaches a later stage of development. This usually means that the leader will use some technique for getting the group started, such as a brief lecture, a statement of a problem, a demonstration, a movie, an exercise in role-playing, a method of having people introduce themselves, or an agenda. The arguments for the use of such techniques often appear convincing.

Some of these arguments were advanced by various members of the Workshop staff as the opening date drew closer and closer. One of the first arguments related to the group's anxieties. Will it not provoke anxiety in our group to be thrust quickly into responsibility, especially since the members will not be accustomed to this kind of freedom? Does not a child have to be weaned gradually from dependence on the parent? Is not giving a group complete responsibility like throwing an infant into the water to teach it to swim? These were the questions we asked ourselves, and as we explored them more intensively, we turned again to the experience of the client-centered therapist for guidance.

The client-centered therapist, when he meets the client for the first time, usually waits until the client himself initiates the conversation. Or he might say something like, "As I understand it, you want to come here for help on some problem," or, "Begin just wherever you feel like starting." Some clients will begin without any such "invitation" from the therapist. Others may ask the therapist to tell them where to begin, and, upon discovering that he feels incapable and hence unwilling to do so, express feelings of surprise, disappointment, or hostility. Nonetheless, when the client-centered therapist adopts this kind of nondirecting or nonintervening approach and consistently maintains it, clients eventually begin to take faltering steps toward the self-direction of their interviews. If, as in some cases, there is some initial anxiety about doing this, it usually is offset by a kind of relief that the therapist is not "in charge," is not going to take over and try to produce changes. As the full significance of this fact begins to be apparent to the client, he becomes more immersed in the permissiveness and the nonthreatening climate of the interview situation — he relaxes his defenses, lets down his internal barriers, and begins to explore more deeply his problem and his attitudes and feelings toward himself and others. He is well on his way toward experiencing self-direction and self-responsible behavior in the interview situation.

If this approach is effective with clients in therapy, why would it not be worth trying with groups? This was the challenge the Workshop staff accepted. We would dispense with the customary techniques of starting groups. We would rely on the group's own motivation to develop, much as the therapist trusts the client's desire to become a more effective and responsible person. In a sense we were deciding to meet the group exactly where it was at the time. This is to say, we decided to accept the group just as it would be when it arrived at the Workshop — unstructured, unorganized, confused in its purpose, and dependent upon the staff leaders for direction. We would not impose a structure, force an organization, relieve the confusion, or reinforce the dependency by playing the typical role of the group leader.

THE TENACITY OF THE NEED TO PLAN

One of the most interesting aspects of the pre-Workshop preparation was the fact that the leaders, even after agreeing to leave the responsibility for planning up to the group, found it difficult to refrain from planning. Apparently, it is one thing to accept the group-centered *ideal*, but another to implement the philosophy in *practice*. As we look back on the Workshop experience, we see this as one of the most valuable insights acquired. So many leaders in our culture subscribe to the values and principles of democratic leadership but fail to practice it when they carry out their roles as group leaders. The personal record of one of the leaders of the

Workshop caught this process as it was occurring in the pre-Workshop staff meetings:

> Although we as staff members began to feel that we were reaching some agreement about a theoretical framework within which we might operate in the Workshop, a very interesting thing seemed to occur in our meetings. There was a tendency for us as a group to keep bringing up matters for planning. For example, someone would bring up the matter of the kinds of subgroups which we should organize in the Workshop. Then someone would raise the question of why we were actually planning this aspect of the Workshop. If we are to be consistent with our general philosophy, should not this responsibility be left with the delegates? Frequently we would work through this notion and decide that the group should decide this particular matter themselves. Invariably, however, some other aspect of the Workshop would come up for consideration, and again we would begin thinking in terms of our planning for the group. . . . It seemed that as leaders we were continuously expressing needs to plan and structure the Workshop, yet at the same time we would catch ourselves and question the wisdom of such planning. This made us examine again the meaning of planning in terms of the behavior of group leaders. Might it not be that the more insecure we are as leaders, the more we have to plan for a group. . . . the leader who holds a philosophy in which he has great faith in the potentialities of the group should be more willing to rely upon the group's own resources.

Perhaps this excerpt illustrates how easy it was for the staff to keep slipping back into planning for the group, even though intellectually they held to the value of allowing the group to take responsibility onto its own shoulders. This was one of the early lessons learned by the Workshop leaders: If he is to resist the tendency to assume responsibility for others, a leader must continuously reaffirm his faith that the group *can* take responsibility itself.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LEADER'S STATUS AND FUNCTION

A recognized leader gets many satisfactions from his higher status position in his group. Our culture rewards leadership but neglects membership. To be known as a group's chairman, president, captain, teacher, or foreman brings certain distinctive rewards. It satisfies the basic human need to feel important and needed. So it is that the idea of group-centered leadership, with its emphasis on "distributed leadership" and its reminder that status differences between leader and group members can be a barrier to free and creative participation, is often perceived by leaders as a threat to their own security. So threatened, they invariably raise certain complex questions about their status.

The planning stage of the Workshop experiment illustrated this concern of leaders for status. Because the Workshop was a training situation and the staff initially perceived themselves as teachers or trainers, one of the first questions raised was, "Will the delegates make use of the special knowledge and skills possessed by us?" This question actually was only a more intellectualized way of expressing concern as to whether the delegates might perceive us as remiss. Would it seem to them that we had no point of view and no specialized knowledge, that we were unqualified as teachers? As a staff we had decided, intellectually at least, to try out a philosophy which meant leaving it up to the group itself to decide what it would learn, what it would read, what issues it would discuss. This decision ruled out our planning a series of lectures by the staff, or our scheduling special topics for discussion. Conceivably the group might even decide to spend its time discussing problems of which the trainers had no specialized knowledge.

Our philosophy called for a role radically different from that to which most of us were accustomed. We had become accustomed in the past to structuring the teacher-student relationship in such a way that the teacher always was seen as the "expert." This we easily accomplished by selecting special topics with which we were familiar, by preparing lectures on these topics, and by so structuring the situation that we disseminated our knowledge to the others, who in turn saw themselves only as learners.

By these methods the traditional teacher actually *insures* the definition and maintenance of his role as an expert. He insures that he will have more status than others in the group. In contrast to this way of doing things, the group-centered leader does not pre-arrange that his special knowledge or talents will be utilized by the group. When he allows the group to choose its own topics for discussion, he even runs the risk that the group will select some topic on which he is unprepared. It is not surprising, then, that the teacher who decides to try out a group-centered approach begins to feel insecure and apprehensive as he faces the approaching encounter with his students. He can never be sure that he will always have something to offer the group because he has not determined beforehand what the group "wants." Consequently whatever prestige he acquires must come only from what he can contribute to the satisfaction of the group's needs, *whatever these needs may turn out to be*. The group-centered leader in a sense takes his chances along with the other group members with respect to acquiring status, prestige, or reward for his contributions. He must prepare himself for the possibility that other group members may be able to contribute more than he. He must work out his role in the group like any other member, rather than define a role for himself by structuring the situation beforehand.

Though this point of view sounds acceptable in theory, it is difficult for leaders to carry out in practice. The idea of going "unprepared" into a situation in which group members have invested their leader with status, often even before they have seen him, calls for a type of security seldom possessed by those accustomed to more traditional leadership approaches. This became apparent to those of us planning the Workshop, for we could not help having some feelings of insecurity about the new approach. We had accepted a group-centered approach in theory, but as we began to plan ahead and formulate the kind of roles we would have to play in order to be consistent with the theory, our anxieties about status emerged. Of these, some will be apparent from the following personal notes written by one of the staff before the Workshop began:

> While we have agreement on the theory, there are still certain uneasinesses existing in us, when we remember how difficult it is for a large group of people to establish a consensus. Sometimes people get so discouraged that they quit before the complex process which is necessary can be brought to a victory. We are also uneasy that we as the leaders may seem to the group to have no vitality about this thing called group dynamics. We may seem to them to be neutral, passive, sitting around waiting for somebody else to carry the torch. And therefore there is always the possibility that some people will commence to say to themselves in effect, "Well, if this doesn't mean any more to these people (the leaders) than

> this, then why do the rest of us bother about it?" Some of us also have an uneasiness that this procedure may allow a wonderful opportunity for members used to dominating a group to speak up and monopolize. And we may have to wait quite a little while before some of the rest of the people assert themselves and get back to normalcy. Another uneasiness is that we wonder whether good planning can be done by a group of people with very little experience.

The anxiety of this leader is being expressed in several different forms — a concern that a large group might not be able to reach a consensus, a fear that the group will think the leaders are not interested in their subject, a concern that some members will talk too much, and a feeling that good planning cannot be done by people with less experience than the leaders. Most of these "uneasinesses" undoubtedly were expressions of the concern which we all felt about our own loss of status in the group. Running through the minds of each of us were such questions as the following:

> "How am I going to get across my point of view?"
> "Will the Workshop delegates want to utilize my resources?"
> "Will the delegates think I don't know my stuff?"

One of the staff leaders expressed his concern in a rather different way:

> As leaders we have more than one function that is expected of us. We are not only leaders of the group process (its development) but in the eyes of some members we are also *experts* in the field. We are considered a source of important ideas and suggestions even if we don't want to be. Part of the question is: Do we want to be?

This leader is expressing some of his own ambivalences about playing the role of "expert." The group will expect it of him, yet does he want to be perceived in this way?

Such anxieties and concerns as were felt by the Workshop staff as we went through the stage of planning are the kind that deter leaders from trying out a group-centered approach. If we had not taken the time to work through these anxieties, we would have succumbed to the natural tendency to structure the situation in some way that would be conducive to securing and maintaining for ourselves special status and prestige in the group. Such anxieties make it easy for leaders to fail to *implement* the theory of democratic leadership when they operate in the group situation.

It was only after much working-through of these anxieties in long discussions that the Workshop staff was able to arrive at a working hypothesis regarding our roles as leaders. Essentially this was a hypothesis that involved the following predictions:

1. If we did not impose our leadership on the group, leadership would immediately emerge from among the group members.
2. If we did not plan or structure situations calling for us to assume a leader role (lectures, special topics for discussion, and so on), the group would eventually make use of whatever special resources we possessed that might be pertinent to their needs.

These predictions grew directly out of our previous theoretical thinking. In theory, if a leader can become "just another group member" his contributions will be accepted or rejected on their merits like any other group member's. As long as he is perceived as *the* leader, his contributions may be rejected out of an emotional reaction against an authority or be accepted out of an emotional dependence upon authority. This in effect means that only when a leader loses his special status position is he actually freed to become a creative contributor to the group effort. Furthermore, only if the group is freed from the task of either reacting against or submitting to the leader's contributions will it gain in the long run by being able to reject contributions of the leader which are inappropriate and to accept those which are appropriate to the solution of its problem.

THE LEADER'S TOLERANCE THRESHOLD

The leader who decides to try out a group-centered approach will be faced with the problem of his own tolerance and capacity to accept the consequences of his initial impact upon the group. As he plans his approach, he cannot help foreseeing that the group members may react quite strongly to the strange role he will play and the novel situation in which they will find themselves. Accustomed to the role of traditional leaders, the group members are certain to be surprised and shocked by the role of the group-centered leader. Having become used to group situations in which the leaders invariably have assumed almost sole responsibility for the group at the outset, the members will be expected to resist and resent a leader who does not follow the usual pattern of leadership. Consequently, not only does the group-centered leader have to face his own fears and anxieties but he also has to be prepared to absorb the hostile reactions of the group members which stem from their own fears and anxieties.

The group-centered leader must be prepared to absorb hostility, openly expressed or subtly disguised. People who are accustomed to the security of a dependent relationship with leaders often react with hostility to a leader whose role does not permit such a relationship. The group-centered leader also will need to ask himself if he can tolerate the group's initial demands for direction and control, for often the members will literally plead with him to fulfill this function. Finally, the group-centered leader will need to prepare himself for the inevitable floundering and confusion that occurs in a group when it is first confronted with this type of leadership. The group will appear to make little progress, exhibit much trial-and-error behavior, deviate from the topic under discussion, be slow to make decisions, and become entangled in its own complex procedures. Group members will become frustrated, impatient, and bewildered. It will be hard for the leader to tolerate all of this. He will be tempted to step in and bring order out of the confusion, to structure the unstructured, or to impose his will upon the members who seemingly cannot find a will of their own.

The Workshop leaders began to develop expectancies of these reactions long before the delegates arrived for the first session. Again our own insecurities began to emerge. We asked ourselves if we would be able to tolerate such reactions, if we were secure enough to be accepting of the group during this traumatic stage of its development.

For help in working through our own anxieties, we turned again to the experiences of professional psychotherapists, particularly those who had considerable experience with the client-centered or nondirective approach to therapy with individuals and groups. We were aware that client-centered therapists frequently have to deal with these very same reactions, when their clients first discover that the therapist is not willing to assume responsibility for the way the client uses the therapy hour. How does the client-centered therapist tolerate his clients' hostility, frustration, floundering, and demands for direction? One of the Workshop leaders recorded this stage of the staff's thinking in his personal diary:

> At this point we as staff members have to face the problem of whether or not we would be comfortable in this kind of situation. Each of us has to ask himself whether he could show tolerance for the inevitable initial floundering in the group, their expressions of frustration, and perhaps even their choices which might be "inferior" to our own. This of course raises the question as to whether or not the effect upon a group of going through the process of making a decision independent of its leaders would outweigh whatever disadvantages there might be in the initial floundering of the group. In individual psychotherapy, quite frequently during the early stage of therapy, the client makes a decision about a particular way of behaving, yet may discover later that this was an inadequate decision, and thereupon sets out to make a better one. As a therapist each of us seems able to tolerate these initial decisions. Is this because we have so much faith in the positive effect upon the individual of the very act of making an independent decision?
>
> . . . It may be a basic principle that the amount of tolerance which a group leader has for different kinds of behavior on the part of the group members is a direct function of the amount of faith, or call it belief, that the leader has in the positive forces contained in the group; or it may be the amount of faith that the leader has in the potentialities in the group for arriving at the goals best for them and the most appropriate methods of achieving those goals. This principle seems to operate at least in individual psychotherapy as we receive more evidence of the potentialities within the individual client.

This Workshop leader is here attempting to discover how the client-centered therapist seems able to tolerate his client's initial floundering. It appears to him that the therapist relies upon a deep faith in the client's potentialities. Even though a client's early decisions may seem inadequate, the client-centered therapist still can be accepting, in part because he trusts the client, but also because he sees the act of making independent decisions as a necessary step in the client's development. In a sense, this Workshop leader is asking whether he as a leader could be more tolerant of his group if he could muster this kind of faith in the group.

The principles and practices of client-centered therapists were thus both a challenge and a source of support for the Workshop leaders during this period of examining our own concerns. It was a challenge to try to develop as much confidence in the self-directing potentialities of our group of delegates as the client-centered therapist has in the client. We drew support from the apparently successful outcome achieved by the client-centered therapist when he relies upon the client's potentialities. If individuals in therapy could learn to become self-directing by means of a relationship in which the therapist consistently accepted their initial floundering, then would not a group achieve the same kind of independence from a similar relationship with its leaders?

The client-centered therapist somehow finds it possible to absorb a client's overt hostility, his feelings of discouragement, his frustrations, and his needs for guidance and direction from the therapist. To be able to do this requires an unshakable faith in the client and a lack of defensiveness and insecurity on the part of the therapist. When a client says, "I can't possibly help myself, you *must* tell me what to do," the therapist continues to believe that the client *can* help himself. When the client says, "You really know what is best for me but you won't tell me, and I resent this," the therapist does not perceive this as a personal attack upon himself. No matter how hostile, discouraged, and helpless the client feels, the therapist's consistent acceptance of these feelings, combined with his faith that the client will move forward to more positive and constructive feelings, accelerates the process by which the client becomes more self-responsible and self-directing. That this can and does occur in psychotherapy gave us the confidence we needed as group leaders to resolve to maintain a "therapeutic" relationship with the delegates coming to the Workshop.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LEADER'S LIMITS OF ACCEPTANCE

In planning a group-centered approach, leaders inevitably come face to face with the problem of their own limits of acceptance. How far can a leader go in accepting the group's decisions? Are there not limits beyond which the leader cannot be genuinely tolerant or accepting of group action? When does the leader take a stand against the group will? What if the group makes a decision that is contrary to the leader's sense of morality, his standards of conduct, his fundamental values? Can he convey acceptance when down deep inside he does not approve of a decision? How does he keep from submerging his own individuality and denying his own feelings and convictions? All these questions are crucial for the leader who is considering a group-centered approach, and all relate to the concept of "limits."

The Concept of the Leader's Limits

Probably no leader ever finds it possible to tolerate or accept any and every kind of behavior of group members or every action of the group. In fact, no person can have a relationship with another without having certain limits beyond which the behavior of the other person cannot be accepted. Each one of us operates in every situation within certain limits. These limits define what we can accept both in our own behavior and in the behavior of others. The nature of these limits varies with each situation, and varies from time to time in the same situation. A parent may accept his son's destructive behavior in his own home but will not when they are visiting in someone else's. A child's noisemaking that is ordinarily tolerated may become unacceptable on a Sunday morning when the parent wants to sleep late.

Another way of describing the function of limits is to say that there exists an "area of freedom" within which each of us is free to make choices, to select from alternate ways of behaving, or to be autonomous. Norman Maier (54) has pointed out the importance of this concept in analyzing leadership in industrial organizations. Thus, as he recognizes, groups at each level of supervision have their own specific and limited areas of freedom, defined by the nature of the job, the existence of higher levels of supervision, problems requiring experts, union contracts, and labor legislation. All these factors limit the number of activities or decisions falling within the group's authority.

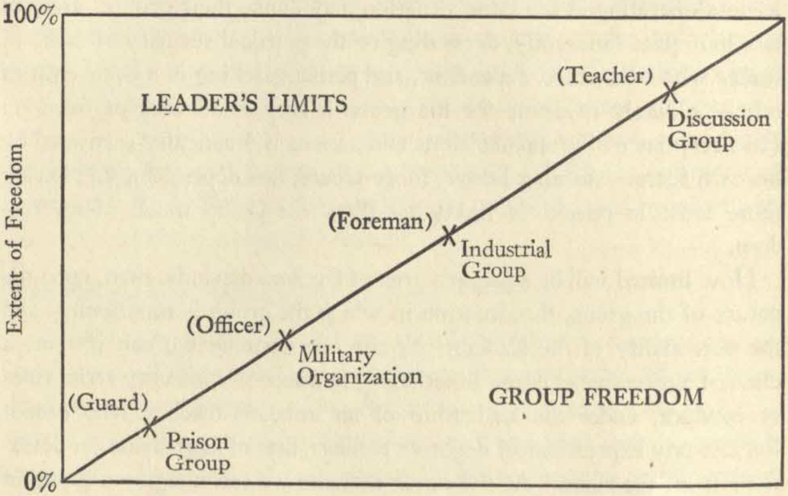
In one sense Maier is correct in recognizing the existence of such "external" limiting factors. But in another sense, it is not enough to say that these factors alone limit the group's area of freedom. A group's area of freedom may be limited by *the leader's own perception or interpretation* of such factors. This difference is important, inasmuch as two leaders operating in the same situation may define their groups' areas of freedom quite differently, depending on the personal security of each. A leader who is insecure, dependent, and perhaps lacking in a basic trust of others is likely to define for his group a very small area of freedom. His acceptance of group decisions and actions is drastically restricted by his own fears. Another leader, more secure, less dependent, and having more trust in people, is likely to allow the group much more freedom.

How limited will be a group's area of freedom depends, then, upon the nature of the group, the situation in which the group is functioning, and the personality of the leader. At the one extreme we can imagine a class of aggressive children functioning in a school with very strict rules of conduct, under the leadership of an insecure teacher who cannot tolerate any expressions of negative feelings, acts of aggression, or deviations from the rules. At the other extreme we can imagine a group of mature adults functioning as a therapy group or a discussion group independent of any larger organization, and having an extremely permissive leader who does not feel threatened by hostile feelings directed toward himself. In the first situation, it would be expected that the teacher would find it necessary to put severe limits on the behavior of her group of children. Even if she were willing to encourage the group to make decisions for itself, she would probably have to set very narrow limits within which such decisions could be made. In the second situation, the leader might be able to accept almost all decisions that would be made by his therapy group, feeling no need to limit its area of decision-making or action.

Most groups, however, fall somewhere between these two extremes. In most situations, a leader will be free to operate only within certain limits defined by his perception of external authority or by his own lack of personal security. For example, a supervisor in an industrial organization might find it necessary to enforce company rules about hours of work, wages, promotions, and the like. Furthermore, he might feel obligated to require his work group to carry out the specific jobs or tasks that were determined by those higher up on the organizational chart. Perhaps, too, he would have to require his group to use given methods

Figure 1

Relationship Between the Leader's Limits and the Group's Freedom


100%
0%
Extent of Freedom
LEADER'S LIMITS
GROUP FREEDOM
(Teacher)
Discussion Group
(Foreman)
Industrial Group
(Officer)
Military Organization
(Guard)
Prison Group

or techniques of doing the job. Consequently, his group would have to operate with only a few "degrees of freedom."

The relationship between a leader's limits and his group's freedom can be shown diagrammatically (Figure 1). The more limits a leader must impose on his group, the less freedom the group has for decision and action. Theoretically it should be possible to locate any group somewhere along the diagonal line. In a prison group, for example, it would be necessary to impose such extreme limits that the group would have only a very small area of freedom. Farther up on the scale would fall a military organization, having somewhat more freedom and autonomy but still operating under many limits imposed by its leader. In an industrial organization the workers have still more freedom, yet they are denied the right to make decisions on many matters considered the prerogatives of management. An example of a group having the largest area of freedom would be an adult education discussion group whose leader allowed the members freedom to discuss what they chose, freedom to attend or not attend, freedom to select their own readings, and so on. Perhaps the only limits set by this leader would be that the group members meet at a regular time so that he could plan his schedule.

Limits then, psychologically speaking, are restrictions upon the area of freedom of the group. Whether the leader uses his authority to impose these restrictions or simply informs the group what his limits are, the effect upon the group is to restrict its freedom of action. This is certainly not a *desirable* goal from the standpoint of the group-centered leader's theoretical position, for the most rapid development toward self-responsibility and independence in both individuals and groups seems to take place when people can be given the *maximum* of freedom. For a leader to have to set any limits at all probably reduces the group's rate of development toward maturity, yet all leaders *will* have certain limits. The important point is that though limits restrict the freedom of the group, they can help the leader be more completely and genuinely accepting of the group's behavior within its remaining area of freedom.

Perhaps another example from the parent-child relationship will help communicate this principle. To the child, toilet-training is actually not necessary or helpful. In fact there is evidence that it often can be psychologically harmful. Toilet-training helps only the parent and "society." It seems to serve the function of extinguishing certain behavior which, because of its unpleasantness for the parent, would make it difficult for him to be completely accepting and tolerant of the child. Thus, by setting a limit on free and unregulated activity in this area, the parent sets up the conditions that will best enable him to give the child love, affection, and acceptance. Had the parent not set the limit, yet retained the same attitudes toward the untrained child's activities, the conditions would have been set for reduced love and affection, if not rejection of the child. On the other hand, the parent who can *genuinely* accept the untrained habits, and consequently is willing to let the child learn toilet habits whenever he is ready, is probably contributing even more to his child's development and independence. Thus a parent would do well to increase his tolerance threshold and to learn to become more accepting so that his limits can be kept to a minimum.

The argument is often advanced that a group-centered approach is not possible except in situations where there are very few limits which the leader is required to impose on the group. Those who offer this argument thus claim that a foreman in an industrial organization cannot be group-centered because there are too many demands imposed on him from above requiring him to limit the area of freedom of the group. It seems clear from Figure 1, however, that the area of freedom allowed different groups is a *relative* matter. Similarly the number of limits under which the leader operates is a relative matter. Thus, even a prison guard could be group-centered to an extent — that is, he could allow, even encourage, his group of prisoners to make group decisions on certain matters. He could give the group the authority or the freedom to be self-governing and self-directing within the limits dictated by the regulations of the prison and the limits of his own acceptance and trust of the group.

But a leader who is considering adopting a group-centered approach to his group must, during the planning stage, carefully think through this problem of limits. He must try to answer such questions as, "How free am I to accept the decisions and actions of the group?" "What limits must I set in order to feel comfortable?" "What responsibilities have I assumed which limit my trusting the group's decisions?" Only if a leader is fairly clear about his limits will he be able to be completely accepting of the group's actions or decisions within its area of freedom. Perhaps this relationship will be made clearer by the use of an illustration drawn from common experience. Only if a parent is clear that his son's choice of a vocation is within the son's area of freedom — that the parent has no limits upon his son's freedom of choice — will that parent be able to be *genuinely* accepting or tolerant of whatever choice the son may make. Should the parent, however, be unclear in his own mind about whether he is willing to give his son complete freedom of choice, he is likely to exert subtle pressures to influence the son's choice, or by his own disappointment convey rejection should the son make a choice which the parent cannot really accept.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF LIMITS IN THE WORKSHOP

The Workshop experience offered an illustration of the complex relationship between a leader's limits and the group's freedom of action. Very soon after the staff had committed itself to trying out a group-centered approach, we were confronted with the problem of our own limits of acceptance. One of the first questions we asked was, "What if the group should decide to spend its time discussing problems falling outside the area of our own interest and competence — could we accept this?" At first some of the staff were inclined to feel that if this should occur we would not want to remain in the group, on the supposition that we could spend our time more profitably elsewhere. Further consideration, however, led to the conclusion that if the group made such a choice, it would probably be an expression of some very real needs of the group members. And were we not conceiving our role as one of facilitating the fulfillment of the group's needs? Yes, but did we not have some needs too? It became clear that our earlier temptation to limit the area of acceptable topics of discussion might have stemmed from a personal need to demonstrate our competence in the area of group-leadership theory and methodology. We were worried, perhaps, that in another area we might not have the chance to show our expertness, or to expound our pet theories. This understanding of our underlying motives helped us to decide finally that we could be accepting of the group no matter what they decided to discuss.

With regard to a different problem — the Workshop schedule — the staff worked through to the conclusion that we would have to set certain limits on the group's area of freedom. We first asked ourselves if we would accept a possible group decision to meet in the morning, afternoon, and evening for seven days a week. Such a decision was in the realm of possibility, because we expected the members to be highly motivated to get all they could in the three-week period. Several of the staff felt they could not give this much time because of family or professional commitments. We therefore decided that we might have to inform the group of the limits each of us felt with regard to the amount of time we could spend in the Workshop.

The Workshop experiment was a clear demonstration that the staff initially set more limits than it eventually needed to express. During the planning stage the number of our limits decreased, largely because we took time to examine each limit that we first felt had to be set. As it turned out, we discovered that most of these limits were only reflections of our own insecurity and doubts about the group's potentiality for mature behavior and sound decisions. Time and time again during the planning stage we found that we needed to return to our theory in order to affirm and reaffirm our basic faith in the group.

Eventually we were able to approach our first meeting feeling that it was unnecessary for us to have more than a very few limits on the freedom of the group. From the minutes of the pre-Workshop staff meetings, there is a record of only two limits which the staff set. One was the limit upon time, referred to previously. The second was a limit which the staff felt it must express to the group because of its obligation to carry out some research on the group. We had accepted a grant of money to conduct research studies aimed at evaluating certain aspects of group change, so the staff felt it would have to ask the group to allow time in its schedule for one meeting to enable the staff to introduce our research plans. Some of the limits which we initially thought necessary but later discarded were these:

1. The total group should break up into subgroups, because we felt this would be essential for effective communication.
2. The group should use some kind of standard procedure for evaluating itself (such as "observers," "post-meeting reaction sheets"), because we felt an obligation to train the group to develop attitudes of self-evaluation and self-criticism.
3. The group should not be allowed to overlook the religious and philosophical implications of "democratic" leadership. This limit was probably a function of the staff's "pet" convictions plus an initial fear that the group might not explore this important area of thought.
4. The group should be required to examine fundamental theory before it grabbed on to leadership "techniques." This limit was at first felt to be necessary because of the staff's conviction that change in leadership skill must involve changes in attitudes and values.

Somehow in the process of discussing the relative importance of these limits, they became unnecessary. The staff decided to trust the group's judgment on these matters, thus widening still further the area of freedom we would allow the group. In essence, we were willing to try out the notion that the group itself would know what was "best" for itself, would learn what was meaningful to itself and discard what was not, would call for specialized information or techniques when it felt a need for them, and would group themselves in a way that would best fulfill their particular needs. This discarding of almost all limits was a crucial and difficult step for the staff to take, because some of us had been thoroughly indoctrinated in the more "leader-directed" or "group-guided" approach in which leaders limit the group's area of freedom to a much greater extent.

THE PROBLEM OF THE LEADER'S RESOURCES

Another problem has particular relevance for leaders who possess special resources of potential benefit to their groups. Among such leaders would be the teacher with his special information or resource materials, or the "expert-consultant" with specialized technical knowledge or skills. Although the teacher and the consultant clearly fall into the category of leaders having special resources, almost all leaders possess some unique resources. To an extent the parent, for example, is a resource person for his children, in that he possesses skills the children may want to learn or knowledge they may want to acquire. The problem, stated in a very general way, is how a leader can make his special resources available to his group so that they facilitate rather than inhibit the group's development.

This may not seem a problem to those who have become accustomed to traditional patterns of leadership. For the typical leader — for example, a teacher — furnishing resources for the group is merely a matter of organizing material for lectures, assigning readings, and suggesting collateral readings. Often the student is given lengthy bibliographies containing hundreds of references, and in one program known to the writer is even encouraged to read a certain number of pages per week. In education we have grown so accustomed to this straightforward approach to resources that we seldom question its effectiveness.

The teacher desirous of trying out a group-centered approach, however, may find himself questioning his usual ways of handling resources. This was the case with the staff of the summer Workshop, as we began to think through the problem of resources during the pre-Workshop planning period. It soon became apparent that traditional methods were not at all appropriate to a group-centered approach to teaching.

First, we concluded that the group-centered teacher has to rely on a different kind of motivation in his students, if they are to utilize resources. In the usual approaches to teaching, students are simply told what they should read and are subsequently examined on their knowledge. As every teacher knows, the chief motivation of students in this type of educational atmosphere is to get a good grade in the examination. When this pressure is removed and the responsibility for reading is left entirely up to the student, will he make effective use of resources? Will he make *any* use of them? Some of the staff reported having had previous experiences with a group-centered approach in which the students did almost no reading. Could we as the Workshop leaders accept this, or would we have to set a limit here and require that students do *some* reading? We decided that we could and would accept the delegates' doing no reading at all.

We were not satisfied, however, that we understood why students sometimes do not utilize reading resources in a group-centered teaching situation. Is it a function of the way resources are presented? Do reading lists threaten students in some way? Is it that when students have an opportunity to have a *direct* experience, such as in meaningful discussion sessions, they choose to learn in this way rather than from the more indirect experience of reading? It seemed to us that neither we nor other educators had satisfactory answers to these questions. Teachers *should* be asking such questions, we thought. What part does reading other people's ideas play in the learning process? When is the experience of another useful, or when is it harmful to the learner by inhibiting his building up of his own interpretations of experience?

To give additional flavor to the staff's deliberations on these problems, we will quote from the personal notes of one of the staff leaders:

> One way of looking at the problem of resources is to ask the question: What do lists of resources actually convey to the learner in different learning situations? It is quite possible that one of the reactions of the learner might be a feeling of inadequacy. Sometimes students may react to a long bibliography with the feeling of having such a long way to go before they really know something. We have all experienced the feeling that we have so much to learn, that we have done so little reading in comparison with the teacher. This may have the effect, in the eyes of the student, of increasing the already apparent differentiation between the teacher and the student. Thus, the student feels that the teacher is even more of an expert, is even more well-read and learned, and he (the student) is so inadequate and so ignorant. Such an attitude undoubtedly

> contributes to students' reluctance to express their own attitudes and opinions and to share with others their own interpretation of their experiences.

In this excerpt can be found the first attempt of the staff to look at reading lists in the context of our theoretical position that each member should feel free to contribute his own unique experience to the group. We began to suspect that reading lists might very well inhibit student participation. If effective groups are made up of independent and creative contributors, and if long reading lists are likely to make students dependent on the ideas of others, then perhaps they are incompatible with a group-centered approach.

Another approach to the problem is to examine the teacher's own attitudes. What meaning do reading lists have for teachers? The staff discussed this problem:

> What attitudes underlie our usual procedures with regard to resources? Frequently resources are used by teachers as a defense. It is as if they were saying to the student, "You see, I have read all these references which you have not read, and therefore my views cannot be challenged." It is possible that some teachers may use resources as a way of conveying the extent of their scholarliness.

Here was a new idea to us. If it were true that reading lists might be a defense against the challenge to or the refutation of the ideas of the leader, then they would be a real barrier to the development of an effective group. Instead of evaluating the leader's ideas on their merits, the students might accept them only out of a feeling that they had no *right* to evaluate the teacher's ideas.

After facing some of these problems we decided that it would be more consistent with our theory if we did not follow the usual practice of handing out a reading list at the beginning of the Workshop. But should we have no reading list at all? Would not some of the delegates ask us to recommend readings? Our answer to these questions was a decision to help students only if they asked for our help. This meant, of course, that we as a staff should be sufficiently prepared to know where to find the most relevant resources. Our task, then, became one of preparing a list of resources *for ourselves*. Since each of us was more familiar with books and articles in certain special areas than in others, we began by pooling resources. When several of the staff were familiar with a single book, then we discussed whether it would be appropriate. Finally, we decided that an annotated list would be most helpful to us, inasmuch as some references would be unfamiliar to each of us.

The interesting fact is that the staff ended up with a "traditional" reading list, but in the process of thinking through the problem we had radically changed our "traditional" attitudes about reading lists. We now saw the reading list not as something to be imposed on the student, but as a guide for ourselves as we helped delegates individually to work out a reading program. If some of the delegates asked for the list, we would make it available to them too. Furthermore, by leaving it up to the delegates to ask for guidance in reading only when they felt ready for it, we were insuring against increasing their feelings of inadequacy and against widening the status barrier between staff and delegates.

A REDEFINITION OF "PLANNING"

It must be apparent to the reader by now that group-centered leadership requires a redefinition of the concept of "planning by the leader." Today, when planning has become such an important function of our political and social leadership, it may be pertinent to examine carefully what it means to plan for a group.

The most commonly accepted notion seems to be that skillful, intelligent, and clever planning is a prerequisite of successful leadership. History itself, perhaps because historians have put undue emphasis upon the military leader, seems to foster the illusion that the effective leader is the one who can work out the best strategy, the one who has the best program, the one who has the best "platform," or the one who captures the group by master-minding the best plan. While there is considerable evidence to support this view, the fact is that effective leaders often are unusually skillful in releasing the creative capacities of their "followers" and tapping the energy locked up in the group.

Our culture also entertains the stereotyped notion that the successful leader is the person who gets all the facts, intelligently formulates from these facts a plan of action, and then dynamically influences others to carry out the plan. While it may be true that some administrators partially fit this stereotype, it is also true that countless others enlist the participation of their subordinates and group members in formulating plans for their organizations.

If, then, a leader waits until the group itself can become involved in the planning process, what will be the nature of *his* preparation? The group-centered leader obviously is not going to make elaborate plans or map out a strategic program for his group. But what *is* he going to do to prepare for his group? The Workshop experiment provided a partial answer to this question, for the staff found itself involved in a radically new type of preparation.

One of the first conclusions reached by the staff was that group-centered leadership requires a kind of preparation that is quite different from the preparation for traditional leadership. Committed to an approach that left responsibility with the group, we soon discovered, and with some relief, that we need not concern ourselves with organizational plans. How the group was to be split up, who was to be in charge of each subgroup, which leader would have responsibility for recreation, how lectures would be scheduled — these were among the many organizational matters for which the staff did not need to plan. We also discovered that our approach relieved us from the necessity of making the kind of detailed preparations which teachers ordinarily have to make in order to present their subject matter effectively. Thus preparing lecture notes, outlining topics, working up lesson plans, and developing visual aids consumed no part of our planning time. Needless to say, this was an unusual approach for the staff leaders, most of whom were or had been professional teachers. We eventually found it somewhat disconcerting to approach the group without being armed with these customary tools of the teacher.

It is more difficult to describe what the staff's preparation *did* consist of. As indicated in the earlier sections of this chapter, much of our time was spent in earnestly examining our own basic attitudes and beliefs, and in constantly checking them against the philosophical and theoretical foundations of group-centered leadership. When we discovered inconsistencies, we stopped to work through our attitudes or to reformulate our theories. From this experience we became more convinced than ever before that leadership preparation or leadership training is essentially attitude training. Preparation for the Workshop required us to face up to many basic attitudes which we held in varying degrees — our own insecurities, our lack of faith in people, our tendencies to use others for our own ends, our needs for prestige and status, our lack of tolerance of ambiguity, our fear of hostility expressed toward us, and the inconsistencies that often appeared in our systems of values.

One way of describing this aspect of our preparation is to say that we focused attention on ourselves as persons rather than on techniques of presentation, methods of persuasion, or schemes for influencing the group. We found that we were involved in preparing *ourselves* rather than our *subject matter* — a personal or human preparation in contrast to a technical preparation.

In one sense, this concept of leadership training seems radically different from others, because we have become accustomed to thinking of leadership training in terms of offering the leader new knowledge and new skills. In our military organizations the enlisted man is converted to the officer by being given the opportunity to acquire additional information in officer training schools. In industry, too, promotions to positions of leadership are often based almost entirely on the acquisition of technical skill or knowledge. Yet the idea that leadership training should involve a change in the leader's attitudes and basic values is not really so radical when we analyze the job of being a leader in terms of such skills as building confidence in group members, creating a nonthreatening psychological climate for the group, developing the creative potential of group members, improving communication between group members, fostering attitudes of understanding and tolerance in the group, and facilitating the resolution of conflicts.

Such skills as these are acquired by a leader only through changes in his attitudes toward himself and others. To carry out these functions successfully, a leader needs more than superior technical knowledge, more than a bag of gimmicks or "psychological" tricks. Perhaps social science is now beginning to learn that the leadership of other human beings is a skill of human relations, and that preparation for leadership must therefore involve personal change and development at the level of deep-seated attitudes, values, and feelings. We have known for some time that this kind of personal development is essential for the professional psychotherapist, if he is to be effective in facilitating the psychological development of individuals. Now it appears that this same principle holds for the leader who endeavors to release the potentialities of his group.

The Workshop experiment illustrates still another departure from the traditional concept of planning. Ordinarily leaders devote much time and thought to developing skills and techniques of influencing their group members to select certain goals or achieve particular objectives. This aspect of planning goes hand in hand with the traditional conception of the leader as the influencer, the persuader, and the inspirer. In the Workshop experiment, however, the leaders' preparation could be characterized as *an effort to plan how we could avoid influencing the group.* Here is an entirely different orientation toward a group, one in which the leader tries to prepare himself *to guard against* the tendency to manipulate the group. It is a preparation for removing the leader's influence rather than improving it, for enlarging the group's area of freedom rather than restricting it, for transferring the leader's power to the group rather than holding on to it.

THE GOALS OF THE GROUP-CENTERED LEADER

Our presentation of the problems involved in planning the Workshop and preparing the leaders has so far been concerned largely with what the group-centered leader does *not* do during the planning stage. It almost seems as if the group-centered leader decides to discard most of what is traditionally done by leaders in planning. Does this mean that the group-centered leader has no goals whatsoever? Does he approach his group without any positive objectives? Obviously not, or he would have no motivation, other than purely personal gain, for carrying out a group-centered role.

The group-centered leader probably has goals, yet they are distinctly different from the goals of traditional leaders. His goals are very general ones, not specific intentions or concrete end points which he tries to influence the group to reach. For example, the group-centered leader wants to help the group actualize its potential, however the group may decide to do this. Of the same order are the goals of the parent who wants to help his child develop, whatever the direction of that development or whatever the means by which the child may achieve it.

Apart from these very general goals, the group-centered leader sees his task as one of creating certain psychological conditions — a type of social climate — in which group members can learn that it is both safe and rewarding to participate actively in the affairs of the group. This is not an easy task, for most of the individual's life experiences in groups have conditioned him against such active participation. Hence he must really unlearn established attitudes and behavior and learn a new kind of group-member role. In a very real sense, then, the group-centered leader is attempting to set the stage for a re-education of the group members. The group member may have to change a good many previously held ideas and attitudes — about himself, about group leaders, about other group members. To change the pattern of his own behavior as a group member will usually require extensive changes in all these areas of thought and feeling. Before he can begin to play a participant role in a group, he may have to rid himself of the internal barriers that are preventing him from being free and autonomous; he may need to understand and change his mode of reacting to leaders as authority-figures; he may have to learn to trust other people.

Such changes can be facilitated in a psychological climate that is safe, nonthreatening, and secure. This is the theoretical position of the group-centered leader. Hence he strives to create a certain kind of emotional or affective climate which he believes is conducive to the re-education necessary for group members to assume an active role. The proper social climate is a prerequisite for each group member learning to be free — free to express his ideas, to communicate his feelings and attitudes, to offer the group his skills and other unique resources.

The second immediate goal of the group-centered leader involves the behavior of the total group, the interaction of members, the processes and procedures of the group as a social organism. He strives to create the conditions that will enable the group to use effectively the resources of its members, assuming that these can be released and made available to the group. It is one thing for a group to have a wealth of inner resources, another for it to learn how to utilize them for the solution of its problems. For the group-centered leader, effective utilization of its resources may mean that the group must learn new modes of communication, such that the contributions of individual members can be understood and assimilated by the total group. The group may have to learn new approaches to solving its problems, such as group discussion methods. It may have to adopt a more flexible organizational structure, one that adapts itself to the changing needs of the group. There are undoubtedly a host of such relearnings for the group as a whole, if it is to develop in the ability to draw on its own human resources. The group-centered leader, by creating the proper conditions in the total group situation, hopes to make it possible for the group to accomplish such changes.

Certain other goals, one can infer, the group-centered leader does *not* have for his group. He does *not* see the group as simply the means by which he, its leader, accomplishes his own ends. He does *not* define his task as that of developing more obedient or willing followers, but, on the contrary, tries to help the group become capable of setting its own rules, standards, and sanctions, and of developing its unique procedures for insuring adherence to such norms of behavior. He does *not* have in mind a certain blueprint for the group's structure or a formula for the group's functioning, but rather strives to create a favorable climate in which the group can create its own blueprint or formula.

It is on this important point that various conceptions of leadership disagree, and it is a crucial issue. It is commonly held that the leader *must* have a policy or a platform, and that his task is to convince his followers of the correctness of his position. According to this view, the leader's goal would be the followers' acceptance of his position. Such a conception of leadership is common in our own country, as attested by the stereotype of the leader as a person who is successful in getting others to do what he wishes or in convincing others of the correctness of his position. It also appears to be a fundamental tenet of the communist theory of leadership, as indicated by the following quotations from Stalin's *Leninism:*

> Therefore, the method of persuasion is the principal method employed by the Party in leading the class. . . . This does not mean, of course, that the Party must convince all the workers, down to the last man, and that only when this has been achieved it is possible to proceed to action. . . . It only means that before entering upon decisive political actions the Party must, by means of prolonged revolutionary work, secure for itself the support of the majority of the workers or at least the benevolent neutrality of the majority of the class. . . .

> Can the Party, should the Party enjoying the confidence of the majority compel the minority to submit to the will of the majority? Yes, it can and it should. Leadership is ensured by the method of persuading the masses. . . . This, however, does not preclude, but presupposes, the use of coercion, if such coercion is based upon the confidence and support of the majority of the working class for the Party, if it is applied to the minority after the Party has convinced the majority. (83, pp. 382–383)

In sharp contrast to this conception of the goal of leadership is what we have characterized as helping the group define and arrive at *its* "position," *its* policy, *its* goals, and *its* methods of achieving its goals. There is reason to believe that if a leader already has a strong policy this often will be a real deterrent to the group's development of its own policy. Especially is this true when the leader attempts to "persuade" the group members to accept his policy.

The group-centered leader, when placed in the role of a formal or perceived leader, thus tries to help the group develop in the direction of the "ideal group" — one in which each member is free to make his maximum creative contribution. To do this, the group-centered leader must play a radically different role from the traditional leader. Rather than enhance the control and authority which inhere in his higher status position in relation to the group members, the group-centered leader tries to facilitate the transference of that control and authority to the group as a whole. In short, he tries to distribute the leadership functions. He progressively tries to become more and more a group member and less and less the group leader. He becomes merely another potential contributor to the group rather than the one on whom the others are dependent for a disproportionate number of contributions.

A Description of the Group-Centered Leader

8

Now that we have seen some of the issues and the personal adjustments involved in preparing for the role of group-centered leader, we are ready to shift our focus to the specific attitudes and behavior of a group-centered leader as he carries out this role in the group situation.

It is particularly at the behavioral level of leadership that fundamental differences between various approaches stand out most sharply. Most of the recent descriptions of "democratic" approaches to leadership share a common philosophical appreciation of the worth and potentiality of the individual, as well as a common theoretical belief in the value of "participation of group members," "a permissive group climate," "the distribution of leadership throughout the group," and other such concepts. But when one looks more closely at the different roles played by the leader as defined by these different "schools of thought," important and quite radical differences are apparent. It often takes a very close look, however, to discover these differences, in part because the same words are being used to describe all of these newer approaches to leadership. Different meanings emerge for these commonly used words when the specific behavior patterns of the leader are examined carefully.

An appropriate example is the word "permissiveness." Many theories emphasize that the leader must be permissive, yet some of the descriptions of the role of the "permissive" leader sanction such things as checking overaggressive participants, drawing in nonparticipants by skillful questions or reassurance, placing some members under personal attack in order to get emotional involvement, sidetracking irrelevancies, and so on. To other leadership theorists, and to us, these behaviors as part of the leader's role would seem far from permissive — in fact, perhaps even manipulative. Another example is the term "nondirective," the original purport of which, as derived from a particular group of psychotherapists, was to convey that the therapist did not try to direct the verbal expressions of clients undergoing therapy. Recently in connection with "democratic leadership" one writer suggested the use of the technique of "nondirective leads" — questions designed to direct the thinking of the group in some direction desired by the leader. In the long run, these semantic paradoxes, such as "nondirective directing" and "permissive manipulation," will actually hide the real differences between points of view instead of bringing them out in the open as differences to be settled in time by experience and research.

The particular bias underlying the point of view here is that in many of the recent formulations of "democratic" leadership the actual behavior of the leader has not always been consistent with basic democratic values or with the proponent's expressed philosophical or theoretical orientation. In short, in some of the current descriptions of democratic leadership, the leaders' behavior was not as "democratic" as his professed philosophy and theory. Theorists have not gone far enough in developing a coherent description of the leader's role which rather consistently implements their theoretical principles or their democratic values. It is the purpose of this chapter to describe a particular leader role which appears to us to be at variance with some of the existing conceptions of the role of a "democratic leader."

Our description will include a general statement of the group-centered leader's philosophy, particularly as it concerns the group and the persons who make up the group. In addition, we shall describe the group-centered leader in more objective terms, relying upon some of the quantitative measures obtained in the Workshop experiment. An attempt will be made then to describe certain aspects of the group-centered leader's behavior during his initial contact with a group. Finally, we shall try to analyze the group-centered leader's behavior as he carries out a changing role over a period of time with his group, for it has become clear that the role of the group-centered leader is a changing one. At first, when he is actually perceived by the group members as someone filling a position, having more status, and possessing more power, the group-centered leader finds it necessary to play a different role than later, when the group has become more self-directing and self-responsible and when the leader has actually lost his leadership position and is perceived as merely another group member. When the leader is successful in achieving this state of affairs, we can stop talking about *the* leader and begin talking only about group members. For in theory, group-centered leadership is an approach which aims at replacing a single leader with as many potential leaders as there are group members. As we have emphasized before, however, in most groups there will already be a perceived or designated leader. Our description is of a role which such a perceived leader can initially adopt, if he wishes to use his position to develop the leadership potential of his group members.

ATTITUDINAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE GROUP-CENTERED LEADER'S ROLE

Already some of the values and attitudes of the group-centered leader may have been inferred from the earlier discussion of the group-centered way of looking at the concept of leadership in groups. Nevertheless, some of the more specific values and attitudes of the group-centered leader need closer examination because of their significance as determiners of his actual approach to groups and of his behavior in interaction with group members. It should be emphasized again that these values and attitudes toward groups have come to be accepted by the group-centered leader as a result of his experiences in groups — they have not been drawn out of thin air or extracted from sterile philosophical and theoretical systems. Neither have these attitudes become crystallized all at once for him. Rather he has gradually learned to accept them over a period of time, while constantly experimenting with different approaches to groups. They have been continuously revised on the basis of this on-going experience, and needless to say they are at present only hypotheses which await further testing.

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF HIS PHILOSOPHY

To the group-centered leader, a group exists for the realization of the purposes and goals of its members. These purposes and goals will vary from group to group and will vary from time to time within a single group, yet always the group is simply the means by which the members are enhanced through the achievement of *their* purposes. It is incompatible with the values and attitudes of the group-centered leader that a group should exist for the realization of the purposes and goals of the leader, apart from the group. It is also inconsistent with his philosophy that a group should exist for the accomplishment of the aims and objectives of someone outside the group. The group-centered leader, therefore, believes that responsibility should reside with the total group. It is the group, not the leader, who has the responsibility for setting its goals and defining its purposes; and consequently it is inconsistent with the values he holds to deny the group such responsibility. It is the group that should have the responsibility for making decisions on matters that will affect its members; and consequently the group-centered leader finds it incompatible with his values to make such decisions *for* the group. Finally, the group-centered leader believes that it should be the responsibility of the total group to set its own rules, its standards of member behavior, its laws and regulations, within the limits dictated by the external situation in which the group is operating.

Believing as he does that the group exists for the fulfillment of certain of the needs of its members, the group-centered leader sees the procedures, forms, structure, or rituals of the group as having no value in and of themselves. Insofar as they contribute to the enhancement of the members of the group, however, they have definite value. The group-centered leader cannot accept the way some business or industrial executives worship "policy" to the extent that human values are often made secondary to the value of rigidly maintaining and sticking to "the company's age-old policy." Although the group-centered leader recognizes the need for a group to have policies, procedures, and rules of behavior, nevertheless it is his conviction that they should be merely the *products* of group functioning, the means by which the group may actualize itself, the instruments of the group. As such, they should serve the group rather than determine how the group always must function. For example, the writer has become increasingly aware of the extent to which strict adherence to the honored and universal "parliamentary procedures" can strait-jacket a group so effectively that its functioning is no longer appropriate to the problems it must solve. One wonders how such a set of standard group procedures, which might have been very appropriate for a particular legislative body operating in a different century, could have become accepted as the required mode of operation for so many diversified groups varying all the way from a board of directors of a large corporation to a boys' club organized for fun and recreation.

Just as the group-centered leader prefers to operate on the basis of a philosophy characterized by faith in the individual, so he has chosen to adopt an attitude that the group can be trusted. His philosophy is at variance with the underlying assumptions of such writers as LeBon and Freud, who stressed the notion of the ignorant masses and the competent leader. LeBon's point of view clearly made the crowd a mob of instinct-ridden, uncritical, and unstable individuals. The eminent sociologist, William Graham Sumner, championed this same conception that the masses were men who were on a basis of equality and who could never be anything but hopeless savages. Though one seldom hears such extreme attitudes expressed today, the influence of such writers on present-day thinking should not be minimized.

Nevertheless, the group-centered leader prefers to grant the group a good deal more potential. He has much more respect for the capacity of the group for self-direction, critical thinking, resistance to external influence, and appropriate problem-solving behavior. Although he recognizes that history can furnish many examples of groups which seem to fit Freud's or LeBon's description, he is not blind to the fact that other groups have demonstrated quite opposite characteristics. The group-centered leader recognizes the existence of both positive and negative characteristics within every group. However, his clinical experience in dealing with individuals in the process of therapy has sensitized him to the fact that much of their negative behavior is a consequence of earlier experiences in which they have been subjected to the authoritarian control of parents, teachers, employers, and other leaders. In other words, individuals, and likewise groups, *can* become reactive, hostile, aggressive, destructive, submissive, dependent, suggestible — or they *may*, in Freud's words, "want to be ruled and oppressed," "demand illusions," "submit instinctively to anyone who appoints himself as master." They can and do exhibit these tendencies, but to the group-centered leader these are the tendencies of sick individuals, these are the characteristics of a group that has not been given the opportunity to develop and express its more constructive modes of behavior. It is precisely at this point that Freud and others erred in their diagnosis. Their argument ran like this: groups need a powerful master and a forceful leader because the group possesses negative characteristics. The conviction of the group-centered leader, however, is that *groups develop these negative characteristics because they have already been controlled by powerful masters and authoritarian leaders.*

The group-centered leader has a respect for individual people. He tries to see each person as having a certain worth and significance quite unrelated to that person's social class, occupational status, personal traits, skills, abilities, appearance, race, religion, or other such characteristics. The significance of the person lies more in the fact that he is a complex, developing organism, a living demonstration of the miracle of life. Instead of respecting a group member because he happens to be very intelligent, comes from a prominent family, and occupies a high status position in his profession, the group-centered leader endeavors to respect this group member simply as a person — someone quite distinct from any other person. Even more important, the group-centered leader strives to develop an equal amount of respect for the person who possesses characteristics that in our culture are judged less desirable or who represents a class of people which has lower status and prestige in our cultural hierarchy. In short, the group-centered leader is constantly struggling to see the worth and significance of each person, divested of the traits, trappings, and symbols on which society ordinarily places some kind of value. He hopes to learn to respect the worker as much as the manager, the teacher as much as the principal, the dull and unattractive student as much as the bright and handsome one, the aggressive and defensive "neurotic" as much as the more placid and secure "normal," the Jew as much as the Gentile, the child as much as the parent. The group-centered leader is attempting to break through the numerous cultural stereotypes by which we evaluate others, in order that he may learn to respect the person for being a person rather than merely a representative of a class of persons.

The group-centered leader prefers to adopt as his working hypothesis the belief that the individual has a vast store of untapped potential for positive, constructive, intelligent, and mature behavior. His is the positive, optimistic, and hopeful philosophy about the nature of man to which reference has already been made in an earlier chapter. The group-centered leader has grown to believe that the central core of man's personality, that which has been called his basic "animal nature" or his organismic self," is something that can be trusted and relied upon, not something that has to be checked, inhibited, controlled, and feared. Thus, if the group-centered leader is successful in facilitating the release of the person's potential, he is confident that what is released will be positive, social, forward-moving, and creative.

These two values of the group-centered leader, his respect for the uniqueness of the person and his faith in the positive quality of man's basic nature, are closely related and in fact inseparable. For if as a leader he had no faith in man's potential for positive and constructive behavior, it is unlikely that he would have much respect for the unique potential of each individual, or would put his energies into the task of releasing the individual's unique capacities. We will strive to release something only if we have faith in what comes out, and we will strive to control and bottle up that which we fear. This aspect of the group-centered leader's philosophy is difficult to communicate clearly. Perhaps because the opposite beliefs and attitudes have become so much a part of our thinking, it is not easy to find the words to express a belief in the positive nature of the human organism.

An Objective Picture of His Attitudes and Behavior

While in the previous section we attempted to describe the philosophy underlying the role of the group-centered leader as it was developed in theory by the Workshop staff during the planning stage, here we shall present more data obtained from our attempt to measure objectively the attitudes and behavior of the Workshop leaders.

Although the Workshop leaders seemed to arrive at a common philosophy and conception of group-centered leadership, certain questions remained to be answered. To what extent did each of the leaders internalize these values and attitudes and make them an integral part of himself? Exactly how much agreement existed among the staff leaders with regard to their conceptions of an ideal group-centered leader? To what extent did the leaders' own attitudes and behavior at the beginning of the Workshop conform to their conception of the attitudes and behavior of the *ideal* group-centered leader?

From an earlier chapter the reader will recall that an instrument [1] was devised for measuring some of the changes in the delegates' leadership attitudes and behavior which were expected as an outcome of the training experience. Using this Q-sort instrument, four of the staff leaders described their ideal of an effective leader both before and immediately after the Workshop. They also used the instrument to describe themselves as leaders, both before and six months following the Workshop. From an analysis of the results, we were able to obtain an objective description of the leaders' own attitudes and behavior and to answer some of the questions raised in the preceding paragraph.

The Staff Leaders' Conception of the Ideal Leader. The first analysis consisted in correlating the sortings of each of the four staff respondents with a criterion sorting arranged in advance by the writer, who had devised the instrument. The purpose was to determine the extent to which the four staff members agreed on a conception of an *ideal* leader, derived from theory. The results demonstrated a very high agreement with the theoretical model, and consequently also a high agreement among the four staff members. The actual correlations of the staff leaders' picture of an ideal leader with the criterion sorting of an ideal leader before the Workshop began were as follows:

Staff Leader A	.76
Staff Leader B	.82
Staff Leader C	.76
Staff Leader D	.66

This high agreement held up during the Workshop, as indicated by the correlations between the staff leaders' sortings and the criterion sorting after the Workshop:

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[1] The reader may wish to refer to the description of the Q-sort instrument, pages 121–122.

Staff Leader A	.80
Staff Leader B	.74
Staff Leader C	.78
Staff Leader D	.67

These high positive correlations, all of which were significant beyond the .01 level, demonstrated that the staff leaders, prior to the beginning of the Workshop, achieved a high degree of agreement as to the attitudes and behavior of an ideal leader. Such high agreement justified combining all the individual sortings of the staff leaders into a composite sorting, called the Staff Ideal Leader sorting and later used as a criterion against which to compare the ideal leader sortings of the Workshop delegates.

This Staff Ideal Leader sorting can be looked at as a more objective

Table 1

Attitudes and Behavior Judged by Workshop Leaders as Characteristic of the Ideal Group Leader

Feels the group has the capacity to solve its own problems, provided each member feels free to give of himself.	*Most Characteristic*
Is willing to have the members take over leadership of the group.	
Believes people can become more self-responsible.	*Very Characteristic*
Feels that attacks on his leadership are to be accepted as much as any other feelings.	
Believes in the inherent goodness of man.	
Feels that a decision arrived at by all group members is usually the best decision for the total group.	
Feels his task is to reduce dependency of members upon himself.	*Quite Characteristic*
Feels leader always ought to trust the potentialities within the group.	
Helps group understand what a particular person is saying.	
Helps group to relate comments of group members to the central stream of thought of the group.	
Is concerned to make every member feel "at home" and belong to the group.	
Lets other members of the group answer group questions.	
Feels he can learn things from group.	
Believes that productivity depends upon each man's own decisive activity.	
Feels the most effective learning is through participation.	*Characteristic*
Feels group members are capable of change.	
Believes, to be most effective, a leader must lose his leadership position.	
Believes "immature" groups need to feel freedom from the influence of authority figures.	
Hopes group will eventually forget he was "the leader."	
Feels the leader must become more and more accepted as just another group member.	

picture of the type of leadership the Workshop staff thought of as ideal at the beginning of the Workshop experience. In a sense, this was what we *thought* was group-centered leadership in theory or ideally. In short, it represented the attitudes and behavior we would like to have as leaders of the Workshop. The components of this picture of ideal leadership can be examined by the reader in Tables 1 and 2. Here we have reproduced only the statements judged as "most" characteristic of the ideal leader

Table 2

Attitudes and Behavior Judged by Workshop Leaders as Uncharacteristic of the Ideal Group Leader

Believes the leader always should be seen by the group as having more status or ability than the members.	*Most Uncharacteristic*
Believes people are generally unmotivated and need inspiration from outside themselves.	
Believes those less educated and informed often have to be led by those more able to point the way.	*Very Uncharacteristic*
Believes the group can be helped the most if the leader takes initial responsibility for setting goals and content.	
Holds to a philosophy which recognizes man's basic anti-social and ego-centered tendencies.	
Believes immature groups need to be first dependent in order to achieve independence.	*Quite Uncharacteristic*
Feels superior to group members because of superior training and experience.	
Makes certain that discussion will occur by asking individuals beforehand to raise questions.	
Keeps a certain amount of distance between himself and group members in order to be most effective as a leader.	
Feels most groups need the guidance and direction of a skilled leader.	
Feels group often needs leader's influence to bring about the best solutions.	
Feels persons are uncomfortable and ineffective without a leader.	*Uncharacteristic*
Feels leader loses prestige when he admits his lack of knowledge.	
Feels he must try to keep the group from taking some kinds of action.	
Has opinions as to where the group should arrive.	
Feels that everyone ought to talk in a meeting.	
Successfully prevents feelings of rivalry, hostility, resentment and the like from being expressed in the group.	
May on occasion use his prestige to get the group to accept what is right.	
Raises questions when discussion lags.	
Tries to restrict highly verbal members who "drown out" less vociferous members.	

and those judged as "most" uncharacteristic, omitting those judged "somewhat" characteristic or uncharacteristic.

The Staff Leaders' Self-Descriptions of Their Own Leadership. In order to determine to what extent the Workshop leaders' own attitudes and behavior conformed to their picture of an ideal leader, an analysis was made of the sortings of the leadership statements which the staff leaders made when asked to describe their attitudes and behavior as leaders prior to the Workshop. Each of these Actual Leader sortings was correlated with the staff member's Ideal Leader sorting and with the composite Staff Ideal Leader sorting. The correlations revealed a high degree of correspondence between the staff's conception of the ideal leader and the self-descriptions of their own leadership, as shown below:

	Correlation between Ideal and Actual Leader
Staff Leader A	.85
Staff Leader B	.71
Staff Leader C	.66
Staff Leader D	.63

	Correlation between Staff Ideal Leader and Actual Leader
Staff Leader A	.83
Staff Leader B	.74
Staff Leader C	.70
Staff Leader D	.55

From these correlations we can infer that the Workshop staff's own leadership attitudes and behavior were very similar, though not identical, to their conception of an ideal group-centered leader. One of the staff leaders apparently felt that he fell somewhat short of his ideal ($r = .55$), although the other three approached their ideals quite closely.

The Workshop experience itself did not reduce this correspondence between the staff's Actual and ideal pictures. When the staff's sortings of their Actual Leader after the Workshop were correlated with those of their ideal Leader before the Workshop, very high agreement was apparent:

	Correlation between Actual Leader (After) and Staff Ideal Leader (Before)
Staff Leader A	.89
Staff Leader B	.78
Staff Leader C	.87
Staff Leader D	.75

The principal significance of these results from the various sortings of the Workshop staff is that they provide one objective and quantifiable picture of group-centered leadership in terms of specific attitudes and behavior patterns. The Ideal sorts give a picture of what the Workshop leaders judged to be group-centered in the ideal; the Actual sorts show how nearly they felt they approximated the ideal in their own attitudes and behavior. Thus we are given one kind of view of the type of leadership which was brought to the Workshop situation. True, it is a view that depends entirely on the subjective judgments of the staff leaders themselves, and as such it does not tell us how these leaders actually behaved in the Workshop or how they were perceived by the delegates. For this information we must rely on other kinds of data to be presented in subsequent sections of the book.

THE FIRST CONTACT WITH THE GROUP

All leaders who have attempted a group-centered approach will agree that the first contact with the group is extremely important to the relationship subsequently established between the leader and the group. In the first contact the group members will be forming first impressions of the leader which may tend to persist, even though the leader's behavior might later change. Furthermore, with groups in which membership is completely voluntary it is important for the leader at the outset to establish the kind of relationship that does not discourage members from returning after the first meeting.

Experience teaches the group-centered leader that people are extremely sensitive to his initial behavior, often responding to subtle and seemingly insignificant aspects of it. Experienced public speakers, recognizing this same tendency in people, often recommend that a speaker should never say anything important for the first few minutes in order to allow the audience to look him over and size him up. From the psychotherapists we can learn how crucial the first interviews with a client can be in determining whether or not the client will continue beyond that point. Recently, for example, when the writer was conducting a follow-up interview with a client who had completed a successful series of interviews, the client made the following statement:

> In coming here, I know, especially after the first or second interview, I considered you as definitely a supporting individual. When I was disturbed I was able to . . . there was . . . I mean, I was not overwhelmed because I knew I always had you to come to. This was quite a support during that period. And I was evidently extremely sensitive to everything you did. For instance, at one time you had to tell me that it was time to stop the interview. When you said this it was a rebuff to me. I noticed little things such as when you would come in the waiting room downstairs, what I felt your attitude to be — whether you overlooked me or if you were friendly and so forth. You were quite an important individual.

It is apparent that the impression the therapist made upon this client at the beginning of the interviews was of real significance to her. Consequently she was extremely sensitive to nuances of his behavior.

Leaders who have tried to be group-centered will also agree that the first contact provokes a great deal of anxiety in the leader himself. As he faces a group for the first time it is only natural for him to be apprehensive. He will be wondering: How will the group respond to this strange new role I am to play? Will they be hostile? What if they refuse to take responsibility themselves and demand it of me? What if no one speaks up? Will not the group simply wait for me to start things going? These and many other similar questions will be running through the mind of the leader as he makes his introduction to the group. At this point, while he feels uncertain and insecure, he will be most tempted to deviate from his earlier intention to allow the group to take full responsibility.

Perhaps this explains why current theories of leadership differ so greatly over the initial role of the leader, and particularly over his approach to the group at the first meeting. It is hard for leaders to approach the first meeting without feeling a strong need to take over, to start the ball rolling, to set the stage, or to direct the group in some way.

SHOULD THE LEADER "STRUCTURE"?

If a leader is going to assume a new role with a group, should he not first explain this to the members and then define specifically how he is going to operate? In other words, should he not "structure" his role for the group so that the members will understand better what is going on? As carried out by leaders advocating this approach, structuring usually consists in telling the group members that their leader is not going to direct their activities; giving reasons why he is not; informing the group that it will be up to each member to take an active role; denying that the leader has any implicit goals for the group; and so on. In one sense, structuring may be an attempt to get prior acceptance from the group for the role to be played by the leader. The leader informs the members in advance what they should expect, in the hope that understanding on their part will reduce their confusion and hostility. He tells the group how he is going to act as its leader, and tries to justify this in some way or another. The underlying assumption is that an intellectual understanding on the part of the group will facilitate acceptance of the new role of the leader and will accelerate the process by which the group becomes self-responsible.

Experience with such structuring leads the writer to conclude that it is seldom effective. Intellectualized explanations usually fall on deaf ears, either because the members find this strange new leader role foreign to their previous experience, or because they do not really believe that the leader can honestly carry out this kind of role. Unsuccessful attempts to structure with groups run parallel to the experience of client-centered therapy. Although it was formerly customary for client-centered therapists to try to explain to clients how the therapist was going to behave and how they might behave, most therapists have dropped this practice. They found that it was seldom possible to communicate verbally the relationship that develops between the client-centered therapist and his client. Apparently it is so unlike other relationships that it can be understood only by actually *experiencing* it over a period of time, in contrast to merely *hearing about* it. For this reason, most client-centered therapists of the writer's acquaintance make no effort to explain this role they will play, but simply go ahead and play it. If they are consistently nondirective, nonintervening, and nonleading, the client gradually begins to believe in the sincerity of the therapist's intentions. In this case the therapist's actions speak louder than any number of words to explain the nature of his role.

A group's reaction to attempts of the leader to structure the relationship is usually identical to the client's. The following brief excerpt from the first meeting of a group of high school students illustrates a leader's attempt to structure the situation. The students were selected by the school authorities because of their severe behavior problems and delinquent tendencies. Notice how the leader, in this case the writer, tries to describe the nature of the situation, and how ineffective his attempt seems to be, as evidenced by the responses of the students:

> *Leader:* . . . However, what I would like to get across here is that you are free to discuss anything you want to discuss. If you don't feel free to talk about yourself, no pressure is going to be put on you to talk about yourself. In other words, you're free to talk or not to talk. So although this group has been selected, as I understand now, on the basis of somebody else's thinking you might benefit, it's up to you as to whether you really want to participate or not.
>
> *Don:* Well, now, what are we gonna talk about. Are you going to present us a problem and ask us what we all think of it?
>
> *Leader:* In other words, I will be very willing to leave it up to the group as to what they would like to talk about.
>
> *Carl:* It's like giving a sheep too much grass.

A few minutes later, after the group has decided how long the meeting will last, the leader again feels the need to structure.

> *Leader:* All right. Would that be satisfactory to you [staying until 11:15]? All right, let's say that, then, today. Now that's all I have to say in the way of introduction. From here on it's up to you as to what you want to talk about.
>
> *Carl:* Give us a point first to talk about.
>
> *Leader:* You don't really want to start out. . . .
>
> *Don:* (Interrupting) Well, we don't have no problem. I don't think anybody here is gonna present us a problem to talk about.

Despite the efforts of the leader to structure this situation as one in which the students could talk about anything, it is apparent that they don't really understand this, nor do they feel free to do so.

The Workshop experiment provided an opportunity to deal with the problem of structuring. During the final stages of the staff's planning, as we were considering how to approach the first meeting with the delegates, we thought we would have to structure our roles for them. This need was an expression of our anxieties; we were concerned that the delegates would expect us to behave like typical leaders, and that they would be confused and traumatized if we failed to cushion the impact of our new role. We first considered offering a lengthy explanation of how we had arrived at this new definition of the role of the leader, why we had decided to try it out in the Workshop. Careful examination, however, convinced us that this was an approach that stemmed from *our* needs, not the group's. We needed to rationalize our own behavior, yet we were fooling ourselves into believing that this approach was necessary to help the *group*. Again our own insecurities were dictating our behavior as leaders.

But should not the staff give the group *some* feel for this novel situation? We considered the possibility of putting on a role-playing demonstration to show how we as a staff followed group-centered principles as we worked together during the planning stage. Our thought was that by providing this kind of a model we would be indirectly structuring and defining our intended mode of operation in the Workshop group. This approach, too, we discarded for the same reasons we rejected the intellectual explanation. We were slowly becoming aware of how strong were our own insecurities and lack of faith in the group. This experience led us to formulate the principle that a leader's attempt to structure is much more a product of his own insecurities than it is a boon to the group. This is not to say, however, that leaders never should structure. It simply calls attention to the fact that structuring only serves a useful function for *them* — namely, to give them additional security to carry out this new leadership role. Experience in trying out group-centered leadership in many different groups will probably greatly reduce the need to structure in the future. As a leader gains more confidence in himself and in the group, he will tend to structure less and less.

A STRAIGHTFORWARD APPROACH TO THE FIRST MEETING

From our experience in trying out group-centered leadership, the Workshop staff evolved an approach that seemed effective in establishing the desired relationship at the first meeting of the group. This approach involved the following elements:

1. Absence of structuring by the leader.
2. Absence of participation-inducing "gimmicks."
3. Acceptance of the group at its existing stage of development, i.e., where it is at the first meeting.
4. Informing the group what plans, if any, have already been made for it.
5. Immediate placing of responsibility on the group for planning its future life.

For the first meeting of the Workshop, a number of small tables had been fitted together, forming a larger rectangular table which would seat thirty-five people. The staff and delegates took positions around the table, the six staff members being distributed amongst the delegates rather than seated together. One of the staff members opened the meeting as follows: [2]

> Well, perhaps we should start our first meeting. This Workshop was conceived by a group of people who are interested in problems of leadership and group life, especially as applied to the church. We have met together many times since that time. Let me try to bring you up to date by telling you what we as a staff have already done for the group. We felt we had to arrange living quarters, plan for places to meet, decide on the length of time for the Workshop, and make other arrangements for the use of equipment and space here. We have also done some preliminary planning about the kind of research that we might do during the Workshop, and for this purpose have been fortunate enough to secure some funds from the University. All these things we felt were necessary to plan before you came to the Workshop. Beyond this

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[2] From written notes. We decided it would be inadvisable to begin using electrical recordings at the first meeting, although the group gave permission to record subsequent meetings.

> we have done no further planning, except to decide together that this Workshop might better meet all of our needs if we as a group planned together from here on. So it is our hope that we can proceed from here and plan our lives together for the next three weeks. We are not at all sure what is the best way to begin this job.

With this brief introduction the leader stopped talking. There was a brief pause, as might be expected, but soon one of the delegates spoke up to offer his opinion as to where the group should begin. Although he addressed his comment to the staff member who had opened the meeting, and seemed to expect from him some judgment of the suggestion, the leader simply phrased the suggestion in his own words and asked if this was a correct restatement. Another delegate spoke, expressing some doubt about the wisdom of the first delegate's suggestion and offering a second suggestion. The leader responded to this in the same way, indicating that he had understood both the meaning of the alternate suggestion and the speaker's doubt about the first suggestion. Within a matter of minutes a small proportion of the group was actively involved in the discussion. Throughout this discussion other staff members attempted to clarify contributions, restating now and again to make sure the delegates were understood.

Of far more significance than the words that were used by the leader in this approach was the attitude that these words communicated to the Workshop delegates. By this introduction the leader was saying, "We are now a group of people with a common problem — that of determining together our own destiny. It is up to us what that destiny will be — not up to the staff alone. We as the group's leaders have faith in the group's capacity to do this job well. We feel the total group can do this better than the leaders alone."

As will be pointed out later, it took several meetings before all the delegates were convinced that the staff was really sincere about these attitudes. Nevertheless, this initial approach had made a real impact upon the delegates. It set the tone and the climate for the entire Workshop. There was no need for the staff to present a "canned" problem for the group, as is so often done to get a group started, for a real problem already existed — namely, what the group was going to do about itself. There was no need for a role-played demonstration, for the group was experiencing a *real* demonstration of a new kind of leadership and of a group's involvement in a problem. There was no need to *explain* how the staff was going to operate, for the staff was actually *demonstrating* this, and the group was seeing and feeling group-centered leadership at first-hand.

SOME DISTINCTIVE FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY THE GROUP-CENTERED LEADER

In addition to carrying out a different role during his first contact with a group, the group-centered leader continuously performs certain distinctive functions throughout the life of the group, but especially during the initial stages of the group's development. These functions gradually are taken over by other members of the group as the members lose their initial dependence upon the leader; but during the early stages of the group's development, these functions are often performed predominantly by the leader.

When we analyze a role as complex as that of a group leader, we do some injustice to its dynamic and personal nature. We need to keep in mind at all times that picking apart the leader's role tends to depersonalize him, making him appear as a collection of discrete and mechanical techniques rather than as a real person with attitudes and feelings, functioning in an integrated and purposeful manner. Nevertheless, it can be extremely helpful to isolate and identify some of the distinctive behaviors of the group-centered leader, in this way making it easier for others to understand how the group-centered leader differs from other kinds of leaders.

Social science can now help in making this kind of analysis, for we are now able through electrical recordings to reproduce group discussions accurately and we have systems of categorizing different kinds of verbal communication. In the present description of the role of the group-centered leader, use has been made of these methods of analyzing the verbal behavior of the leader.

LISTENING

Probably the most important single function performed by the group-centered leader is that of listening to the contributions of others in the group. This would hardly seem worth mentioning were it not for the fact that the group-centered leader practices a very special and distinctive kind of listening.

What We Mean by Listening. Psychotherapists have introduced us to a new kind of listening. They have shown that it can be a powerful agent for helping persons with emotional problems. Its therapeutic effect can be understood when we consider that the emotionally disturbed individual himself suffers from faulty communication, both within himself and with others, and listening by the therapist seems to improve his communication dramatically. Rogers expresses this idea clearly when he writes:

> The whole task of psychotherapy is the task of dealing with a failure in communications. The emotionally maladjusted person, the "neurotic," is in difficulty first because communication within himself has broken down, and second because as a result of this his communication with others has been damaged. If this sounds somewhat strange, then let me put it in other terms. In the "neurotic" individual, parts of himself which have been termed unconscious, or repressed, or denied to awareness, become blocked off so that they no longer communicate themselves to the conscious or managing part of himself. As long as this is true, there are distortions in the way he communicates himself to others, and so he suffers both within himself, and in his interpersonal relations. The task of psychotherapy is to help the person achieve, through a special relationship with a therapist, good communication within himself. Once this is achieved he can communicate more freely and more effectively with others. (80, p. 46)

What the therapist has learned to do is to enter a relationship with another in which he consistently listens with understanding. He has discovered a way of getting into the thought processes of the other person, or we might say that he has learned how to enter into the person's own unique "frame of reference." To do this requires an intent to understand how the other person is looking at the world, how he is perceiving things. The therapist puts on the spectacles of the other person so that he may view reality in the same way. This requires putting aside one's own spectacles, suspending one's own ideas, shutting out as completely as possible one's own way of looking at things.

This is precisely what the group-centered leader tries to do as he listens attentively to the expressions of his group members. Having no need to get his own idea across, having no secret intentions, having no particular goals which he expects the group to reach, he is thus more able to listen to the contributions of others without being concerned about their ultimate effect upon the group. In a sense, he "permits" himself to listen with understanding because he has freed himself from the need to influence and direct the group's discussion.

This type of listening requires certain attitudes on the part of the leader. He must *want* to understand how the speaker is looking at the world. There must be an earnest intent to "be with the other person," with respect to *his* thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. Such an attitude is quite different from one that predisposes the listener to try to change the other person's way of looking at things. Instead of listening with the feeling, "You should be seeing things differently," the leader tries to maintain an attitude of, "Let me try to understand how you *are* seeing things." This attitude is different, too, from one which leads a listener to interpret or "go beyond" what the speaker is perceiving at the moment. It is common practice, for example, for some group leaders to listen for the deeper meanings, for "the unconscious aspects of communication," for that which is not intended by the speaker. This is a different kind of listening attitude from the one we are describing. The group-centered leader tries to hear only what is present in the speaker's awareness and to read nothing additional into the communication.

The Test of Listening. Because we can never be sure that we have completely understood another person, it is important to test the accuracy of our listening. Unfortunately, in most situations involving an attempt to communicate with others, we rarely put our understanding to a test. Consequently, we often misunderstand others or distort their meanings. One of the best ways of minimizing this misunderstanding and distortion is for the listener to try to restate in his own language the expression of the speaker and then to check to see if the restatement is acceptable to the speaker. This is essentially what the group-centered leader is continuously doing throughout the initial stages of the group's development. He calls it "reflection of feelings or meanings," to convey that he is trying to mirror the speaker's expressions so accurately that the speaker himself is satisfied that he has been understood.

This is an extremely difficult thing to do, even momentarily. The reader who is interested enough to test out the accuracy of his own listening will find the following experiment both interesting and revealing:

> Choose a situation in which you have become involved in a controversial discussion or argument with another person. Suggest to the other that you both adopt a ground rule and follow this strictly throughout the discussion. The rule: Before either participant can make a point or express an opinion of his own he must first reflect aloud the statement of the previous speaker; he must make a restatement that is accurate enough to satisfy the speaker before he is allowed to speak for himself.[3]

This little experiment if it is seriously carried out, will demonstrate, first, that it is very difficult to adopt another's frame of reference. Second, it will give the participants a new kind of experience in which they will find that emotions tend to drop out and differences become minimized. Furthermore, each participant will discover that his own views are changing and will admit that he has learned something new from the other.

The Element of Risk in Listening. Not only does listening with understanding require a firm intent to understand another and a kind of rapt attention that we seldom give to speakers; it also requires a certain amount of courage and personal security. This is because there is a real risk involved in this kind of listening. We run the risk of being changed ourselves, for when we really understand another we may be exposing our own ideas and attitudes to opposing ones. To understand completely an opposing point of view means that we have at least momentarily looked at the world through our adversary's spectacles — in a sense, we have tried to become *him* for the moment. In the process we have suspended judgment and withheld evaluation. Consequently, we run the risk of actually adopting the other's point of view or of having our view altered by his. To expose ourselves to such a change requires courage, because each of us is organized to resist change. It is upsetting to discover we are wrong. Therefore it takes a good measure of personal security to enter into a relationship knowing that the stage is being set for a possible alteration of ourselves.

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[3] Suggested to the writer by S. I. Hayakawa, the semanticist.

Perhaps it is fortunate that there is some compensation for the risk assumed by one who is willing to listen with understanding. Strangely enough, listening to another also facilitates change in him. This has been proved by the clinical experience of psychotherapists and is supported by a growing body of research findings in this area. Clients who successfully complete a series of interviews with client-centered therapists show measurable changes in their attitudes toward themselves and toward others. There is also evidence that changes may occur in their basic values and in their personal philosophy.

Listening facilitates change in the speaker in a very indirect way. If a person knows someone is listening carefully and is trying to understand, he may make more effort to express his attitudes and ideas more clearly. By so doing, he may obtain new understandings simply because he is expressing his own ideas more clearly. In trying to understand another person, then, a listener may actually encourage that person to express himself more understandably. This is suggestive of the old saying that "we never really know something unless we can explain it clearly to someone else."

Why the Group-Centered Leader Listens. We have mentioned several of the effects of listening with an intent to understand another. There are many by-products or expected results from this type of intensive listening. In subsequent chapters we shall present evidence for some of these effects, chiefly from the diaries, interviews, and follow-up reports of the delegates. It may be useful at this point, however, to summarize some of the effects the group-centered leader has come to expect from his listening to the contributions of his group members:

> First, group members will feel that their contributions are of sufficient worth to merit being listened to and understood by the leader. This should greatly facilitate participation by the members through reduction of the threat of devaluation.
>
> Second, group members will make a greater effort to express their ideas and opinions more clearly, knowing that someone in the group is listening attentively and is going to reflect their ideas back to them for confirmation.

Third, group members will begin to drop their defensiveness, open their minds to new understandings, think more flexibly, reason more effectively. This should not only improve the quality of contributions but increase the problem-solving ability of the group as a whole.

Fourth, when conflicts or controversies arise in the group, each member is more likely to alter his own point of view rather than defend it vigorously and stubbornly.

Fifth, group members observing that the leader is listening with understanding will themselves begin to listen to each other more attentively and with more understanding.

Sixth, the leader himself will learn far more from listening to others in the group than he would through giving lectures, presentations, and other leader-centered activities.

These, then, are some of the important results the group-centered leader expects to achieve through listening with understanding and through testing his understanding by reflecting the meaning of members' verbal contributions. Each of these results will contribute significantly to the group-centered leader's long-range objectives and goals — (*a*) creating a nonthreatening group atmosphere conducive to creative participation by the members, and (*b*) facilitating communication so that the various members' contributions will be understood by the others and utilized by the group.

Although the leader who expects such results as these has probably learned to do so from his own experiences with groups, there exists fairly extensive experimental evidence for some of these outcomes. The reader interested in examining such evidence may wish to refer to the studies reviewed in Chapter 5.

CONVEYING ACCEPTANCE

One of the barriers to creative participation by group members is their fear of being changed, influenced, evaluated, or rejected. People are not as free to give of themselves and to express their uniqueness in an atmosphere that is threatening, judgmental, evaluative, critical, or moralizing. Consequently, an important function of the group-centered leader is to create an atmosphere that is nonthreatening, nonevaluative, and nonrejecting.

Such an atmosphere cannot be created at once. It may take many sessions before people will begin to feel accepted and free from the threat of change or evaluation. The process can be accelerated, however, if the leader consistently is able to avoid certain kinds of responses and relies heavily on certain other responses.

Responses That Convey Intent to Change Others. There are ways of responding to others which most of us would agree show a fairly obvious intent to change others, to direct their behavior, or to influence them to behave in some particular way. Examples of such responses are:

Ordering, Commanding, Demanding, Requiring, Prohibiting
You must do this.
You cannot do this.
You have to be careful.
I expect you to do this.
Calm down.
Don't take these facts too seriously.

Obligating, Persuading, Warning, Cautioning
You should do this.
You ought not to say such things.
You need to improve your vocabulary.
You'd better not try that.

Appealing, Imploring, Wishing, Hoping
I wish you would do this.
Please do this.
Can't you do this for me?
I am counting on you to speak clearly.

Advising, Suggesting
You might try this.
Why not take another look?
Perhaps you would like to talk about something else.
You could do this, perhaps.

These four categories of responses frequently convey to the speaker that he is not accepted *as he is*, that he is being told to change in some way.

What is being communicated to him is the other's desire for him to think, feel, or behave differently. He is likely to think, "I must change," "I ought to change," "It would be desirable to change," "It would please others for me to change."

Such attitudes are not conducive to the feeling of being accepted. Consequently, the group-centered leader tries to avoid using these four types of responses. As we have emphasized earlier, he will be more successful in doing this if he has freed himself from the need to change others and if his genuine attitude is one of accepting others as they are. It is difficult for a leader to avoid giving orders, persuading, advising, and appealing, unless his basic attitude is one of accepting people as opposed to wanting to change them.

Indirect Attempts to Change Others. There are other ways of responding to people which convey somewhat less directly a desire for them to change, but which nonetheless can be quite as threatening to them as the four types listed above. Consider, for example, responses which convey:

Criticizing, Condemning, Devaluating, Moralizing, Judging
That was a stupid thing to say.
You are wrong.
This is a ridiculous way to look at it.
Your work is not up to par.
You are not being cooperative.

To respond to another person with such statements frequently shows an intent to influence him to adopt new ways of behaving by "extinguishing" or "punishing" the old way of behaving. Unlike the four kinds of responses described previously, where the desired way of behaving is specified, this type of response relies upon getting rid of the undesired behavior. As opposed to saying, "You should do this," the person who makes evaluative statements is saying, "You should not do that." Both communicate an intent to change the other; both can convey lack of acceptance of the person as he is.

People can be threatened by evaluation more often than we generally suppose. This kind of threat can have an immediate and lasting effect on their behavior in a group, causing them to withdraw and avoid participating, or to expend their energies in persistent defense against such attacks on their ideas. Moreover, when the evaluation comes from the leader, who is frequently seen as an authority figure, they tend to place the locus of evaluation with him rather than with the group. This often results in an overdependence upon the leader for evaluating the ideas or behavior of the members. We have all observed groups in which the members rely heavily on the leader for evaluating the worth of contributions, because they are afraid to accept this responsibility themselves.

Does the group-centered leader also try to avoid making *positive* evaluations? It is easy to understand the potential threat contained in negative evaluations, but what is the effect of responses that convey:

> *Approving, Praising, Rewarding, Reassuring, Agreeing, Supporting*
> That was a good idea.
> You did well.
> That was the right thing to say.
> I think you should have done what you did.

Such statements as these can also convey to another that you want him to change. The positive evaluation is often a means of rewarding past desirable behavior in order to "reinforce" it — that is, to insure that it will occur again in the future. On the other hand, it is probably true that people feel less threatened by positive evaluations than by negative ones. This does not always hold, because an approving remark sometimes embarrasses a person and may even mildly threaten him, if he himself does not share the positive evaluation of his idea or behavior. However, there are other possible effects of positive evaluations which should be considered. They, too, tend to shift the locus of evaluation away from the speaker, perhaps even more than negative evaluations. If a leader of a group tends to make frequent positive evaluations of the contributions of members, he runs the risk of encouraging members to rely on his judgment of the worth of the contributions. Furthermore, there is the risk of influencing members to make only those contributions which they feel will be approved by the leader. Finally, the leader who frequently praises others' contributions may build up such an expectation of approval that, should he fail to respond positively to some member's response, it might easily be perceived as lack of approval.

Giving Information. A leader may convey lack of acceptance simply by giving information. This is especially true when the information has not been asked for, but may also be true when the information has been openly requested. Much depends, of course, upon the leader's own attitude and his manner of giving information. As each of us knows, a person who gives us the impression of "knowing it all" or of being "positively correct" will make us bristle up and become for the moment defensive. By his own manner of informing others, he devaluates their worth. He conveys, "I know, but you do not; my way of thinking is correct, yours is not." Lack of acceptance may be conveyed, though to a lesser degree, even when a leader's manner of giving information is not so extremely dogmatic. People tend to resent "being told," even when the informer genuinely has their interest in mind.

Making Interpretations. Another type of response that often communicates lack of acceptance is that of making inferences or interpretations of the feelings, perceptions, motives, or values of the other person. All the following responses might be considered in this category:

> You are being cynical.
> I always thought you knew better.
> You are saying this because you are angry.
> You must want us to agree with you.
> You don't really mean what you say.

Although it is not possible to say that such responses as these always are perceived by people as indicating a lack of acceptance of them, nevertheless clinical experience as well as common sense tells us that people often react defensively, or even with hostility, to attempts to interpret their motives, their intentions, or their inner thoughts. This can be said regardless of whether the interpretation is "correct" or not. To interpret a statement of another often has the effect of conveying an evaluation, a disbelief in the validity of his spoken words, or even an intention to influence his thoughts or behavior (as in the statement, "You are being cynical," which might often convey, "You should not be cynical.")

One research study has produced findings bearing on the effect of interpretations on the verbal behavior of the subjects. These findings strongly support the clinical observation that interpretations tend to discourage clients' further self-expression in therapy. In this study, Bergman (12) analyzed the verbatim protocols of therapeutic interviews in an attempt to study the effect of different types of counselor-statements on the subsequent responses of the client. He discovered that interpretations by the counselors (trained in client-centered methods) were followed *more* often by "abandonment of self-exploration" than would be expected by chance, and were followed *less* often by "self-exploration and insight" than would be expected by chance.

In a significant paper by Porter (68) on the nature of psychotherapeutic interpretation, an unpublished study by J. Rickard is described. Rickard obtained results similar to Bergman's on the effect of interpretation in Freudian, Adlerian, Horneyian, and Rogerian therapy interviews. This study indicated that counselors' interpretations were followed by "resistance" with greater than chance frequency.

While these studies do not present exhaustive or conclusive evidence, they do support the thesis that interpretation of a person's inner thoughts and feelings is an effective way to inhibit his self-expression and to produce resistance in him. It does not seem too great a generalization to suggest that these findings from individual therapy sessions would probably be duplicated in a similar study of the interaction of members of a group. At least this is the position taken by the group-centered leader, who tries always to avoid interpreting the statements of group members.

In summarizing these paragraphs, we might state that a leader conveys acceptance of the members of his group by avoiding statements which convey a direct attempt to change the members, statements which convey evaluation of their contributions, statements which convey an interpretation of members' inner thoughts and feelings, and statements which convey that the members are "being told" by the leader. We will conclude this summary by re-emphasizing the importance of the leader's attitudes in determining the impact of his verbal responses upon the members, and by pointing out that the members' own personalities will also influence their perception of the meaning of the leader's responses. To put it simply, a leader with evaluative and nonaccepting attitudes may communicate them to members regardless of the kind of verbal responses he uses. Similarly, some group members may be so insecure as to read evaluation and lack of acceptance into any response made by the leader.

THE "LINKING" FUNCTION

Another important function which the group-centered leader serves in the group is the "linking" function. In face-to-face discussion groups, it often happens that one person will say something, then a second person will add a new idea but without conveying the relationship of his idea to the first contribution. The thought of each member remains independent or unlinked to other thoughts. Occasionally, someone may enter in and relate his thought to that of another, but usually we can observe several currents of thought in a group, each going its own way. If, however, the group-centered leader makes an effort to perceive the linkage between the separate comments and then conveys this relationship to the group, the discussion then seems to flow in one current, building up force as each new contribution is linked to it.

The "linking" function of the group-centered leader is related closely to his function of reflecting the meanings of members' statements. This is because the meaning of a member's comment often *is* the link to the main stream of thought or to the previous comments. Its actual linkage is frequently hidden by the content of the comment. Thus, by clarifying the meaning of a comment, the group-centered leader makes clear to the group how the new contribution is related to the previous discussion. An illustration from a recorded group discussion may clarify this point. In the following excerpt the group is carrying on a discussion of how one of the members, a social worker, should approach a group of young married people to get them to take social action in their community: [4]

1. *Bill:* I would like to go on record with a very serious objection here. This was the implied assumption that somehow church socials or gatherings in communities for discussion are somewhat more valuable and better and people should do these rather than go bowling. I felt this implied assumption. Why shouldn't men rather go there than to church —
2. *Don:* I don't go along with that implied assumption.
3. *Bill:* Well, *I* certainly wouldn't. I would like to bring in a diagnosis

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[4] Throughout the excerpt the number in each note at the bottom of the page refers to the same numbered item in the group discussion. The writer has used this example in a previous publication (33, pp. 359–362).

that my wife has made from the feminine viewpoint of our society. She, perhaps not peculiarly, much prefers the company of a group of men to a group of women. And I don't think this is necessarily a sex factor. She says you can almost predict what a group of women are going to do.

4. *Jane:* I'll say.
5. *Bill:* They're forced into a mold somehow by our society. She doesn't understand what it is. But a group of women get together and one group is pretty much like another. And very often women join groups not because they want to but because of social pressures. Where men — they seem to live in a much freer and easier society where what they do and who they join with is a function of their own choice. In —
6. *Frank:* I think Mrs. Adams [Bill's wife] overestimates considerably both the interest and the variety of men's society.
7. *Group:* (Laughter.)
8. *Leader:* Bill, your point would be what? I'm not sure I understand what —
9. *Bill:* That much of the operation of women in these social groups is not a function of choice on their part. It's not satisfying their personal needs. It is a function of the role that society kinda forces them into.
10. *Leader:* You are using that as an illustration of your original objection to the effect that we should attach certain values, positive or negative, to these interests and you object strongly to doing that — saying that one interest is of more social value than another one?
11. *Bill:* It seemed to me that what we were essentially saying is that the things that the men wanted to do were not as good for them — were not satisfying their needs — as well as the things that men didn't want to do. And I just kinda don't —
12. *Cathy:* If women get together to clean up the alleys, after all it's the women who have to sit and look at the alleys all day. The men are out working all day. They are not as concerned about the alleys

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8. The leader here is attempting to understand the meaning and intent behind Bill's last three comments. This is especially important here, since in number 2 Don interrupts to defend himself and in number 6 Frank humorously objects. The group responds to Frank with laughter, thus in a sense rejecting Bill. The leader does not understand the link between Bill's comments and the previous discussion.

10. Here the leader is linking Bill's illustration to a previous objection of his, yet he does this in the tentative form of a question.

as their wives. They should be. The fact that there isn't a playground for the children, by and large the mothers would be more concerned with that than the fathers. Questions of this sort wouldn't necessarily hit home to her husband. It seems to me they would be much more interested than their husbands might, who also because of our culture would say, "Why, that's the mother's job."

13. *Stu:* Well, would you carry that further and say that social action interests in general are more natural to the women?
14. *Cathy:* They aren't more natural. I'd say that the culture sort of —
15. *Stu:* Yeah, owing to our cultural situation, would you say in general that they are more politically active, and so forth?
16. *Leader:* Are we really understanding Cathy? I'm not sure that I am. You see a basic difference here, Cathy, between the interests of men and the interests of women?
17. *Cathy:* I see a great deal of difference when it comes to a group discussion, yes. That it can be that there is more interest in a neighborhood group, particularly in the working class, that the wives and mothers would have a more neighborhood interest.
18. *Leader:* In terms of leader behavior, this would — you are simply saying that this would be a better diagnosis of women's needs and that we have to be careful in diagnosing women's needs versus men's.
19. *Cathy:* I think we have to be very careful.
20. *Sam:* I would like to raise a kind of a point of order and wonder are we trying to be a sociology class in this emphasis upon diagnosing needs. To me we keep wandering from what our primary job is. I just sort of pull that out —
21. *Cathy:* You're right.
22. *Sam:* I'd be quite glad to pull back in my shell, but I'm wondering if we are not beyond ourselves. We have no resources in this area. We keep bringing up personal records which really don't count for much in our total assessment.

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16. Again the leader is trying to understand Cathy and to link the meaning of her somewhat involved illustration to the previous comments. Stu, on the other hand, in numbers 13 and 15 is apparently trying to push Cathy to a broader generalization, which she does not accept in number 14.
18. The leader here provides the linkage between the difference Cathy sees between the interests of the sexes and the role of the leader, which was the topic under discussion prior to Bill's comment in number 1.
22. Apparently Sam has not perceived any linkage between the discussion of group members' needs and leadership. He feels dissociated from the original topic.

23. *Leader:* Diagnosing individual needs is not pertinent to our problem, Sam?
24. *Sam:* Well, I was about to jump in with all sorts of personal references. I work with these groups all the time and I can present some anecdotes on the other side but it occurred to me that that wouldn't be relevant.
25. *Stu:* It seems to me we are analyzing here, or raising the question, about the function of leadership. If one attitude toward leadership is accepted — in general the community center's point of view on leadership, the social worker's point of view — well, then one must know — one must be able to diagnose the needs of the people in order to function as leader. If another concept of leadership wins the day here, then we can dispense with all of this diagnosis.
26. *Sam:* Then we should discuss the two aspects of leadership and not diagnosis.
27. *Leader:* Stu, you are not willing to accept that that is the best way of leading — diagnosing the group and going out and fulfilling needs for —
28. *Sam:* Yes. That's the point I'd rather argue.

In a group there may be as many different channels of thought as there are members. This often can be seen in the early stages of group development, when each member has his particular axe to grind, when contributions are likely to be more ego-centered than group-centered, when members are responding to their own personal needs to the exclusion of what is going on outside of themselves. It is during this stage that the group-centered leader's linking function is so important. It might be said that the leader, by perceiving these linkages, helps the individual members to become aware of elements in the total perceptual

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23. Although Sam has not stated his feeling as such, the leader reflects tentatively Sam's meaning, thus even linking Sam's comments to the preceding topic of needs.
25. Stu, taking over the linking function, makes a successful attempt to tie together the ideas about needs and the earlier topic of leadership.
26. Sam's comment is not accepting of the group's exploration of the problem of diagnosing needs. Stu's linkage in number 25 was much more useful, as well as accepting, to the group.
27. The leader in trying to catch Stu's meaning went beyond him a little. He might better have said, "You see the problem of diagnosis in relation to one type of leadership but not necessary for another type."

field which previously were not perceived; that the leader helps the group members to enlarge the scope of the phenomenal field to which they respond, thus increasing the chances that their contributions will be more appropriate to the existing situation.

SOME MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT THE LEADER'S ROLE

Because the initial role played by the group-centered leader is so unlike that of traditional leaders, it is not surprising that some people have developed certain misunderstandings about it. It may be helpful to the reader to know what some of these misunderstandings are.

Does Listening Mean Agreeing?

One misunderstanding has to do with the function of "listening with understanding." It is often assumed that when the group-centered leader listens and reflects the meaning of a member's statement this necessarily conveys to the speaker that the leader is *agreeing with him*. It is understandable why this misapprehension arises, for we have become accustomed to the kind of communication which *does* convey either agreement or disagreement. When we talk to others, our responses invariably fall into a dichotomy of agreement or disagreement. We tend to convey to others that what they have expressed is either right or wrong, sound or unsound, logical or illogical, appropriate or inappropriate, and so on. We may even go farther and convey some sort of evaluation of the speaker himself — that "he is a sound thinker," "he has good ideas," or "he is one of those hide-bound conservatives." Furthermore, this tendency to respond to another by agreeing or disagreeing is heightened considerably when the conversation involves a subject about which the participants have strong feelings. The presence of emotion in a discussion almost insures that evaluative responses will be made by each of the discussants.

As an example, someone says to you, "I believe teachers with Communist leanings should be ousted from our schools." Your natural reaction will be to make a response that conveys either agreement or disagreement, such as, "I think so too," "You are absolutely right," or "That is a very dangerous philosophy in a democratic nation."

Somehow both our social experience and our educational experience reinforces this tendency to dichotomize everything — to categorize what people say as right or wrong, correct or incorrect. Perhaps even the nature of our language encourages the habit of having to express either agreement or disagreement with others. What is seldom learned is a way of responding to others that conveys *neither* agreement nor disagreement, but rather mere understanding. Why is it so uncommon to hear someone respond to another with a statement that simply conveys, "I hear what you are saying," or "I gather this is what you believe"?

So, because people are accustomed to being agreed with or disagreed with, they may *at first* misconstrue an understanding or reflecting response as an agreeing one. However, from the experience of psychotherapists who have discovered that accepting and understanding responses facilitate communication, we have learned that people very soon begin to feel the difference between a response that is accepting and one that is agreeing. Sometimes they only *feel* the difference, as they experience a sense of being understood and encouraged to express themselves. Often, however, they even *recognize intellectually* that the listener is responding to them in a unique way. As one client said to the writer, his therapist, "You neither agree nor disagree with me, it feels strange. You understand what I'm saying, I know, but you don't tell me your opinion. This gives me a chance to look at my own feelings further."

IS GROUP-CENTERED LEADERSHIP SIMPLY "LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP"?

Some writers have equated the role of the group-centered leader with the laissez-faire leader, the one who does nothing. By this they usually mean that the group-centered leader is passive, indifferent, and nonhelpful like the laissez-faire leader in the Iowa experiments in which this type of leader was contrasted with the "democratic" and the "authoritarian" leaders (50). The implication of this identification is that the group-centered leader (like the Iowa laissez-faire leader) will foster a kind of nonproductive, anarchic, and aggressive group.

Actually, the group-centered leader as we have tried to describe him is far from passive and indifferent, nor does he "do nothing." His role is a very active and intense one, as those who have tried it will testify. To listen attentively to all the contributions of members, to try earnestly to understand others from their frame of reference, and to test the accuracy of one's understanding by reflecting back the meaning of the speaker (to his satisfaction) — all this not only requires a great deal of energy but also results in an intense involvement of the leader in the process of communication going on in the group. The group-centered leader is not listening passively; he is listening attentively and is actively projecting himself into the stream of thought of the group. He cannot be disinterested, else he will find it impossible to understand others; he is not "leaving the group alone," for he is a dynamic influence on the effectiveness of the group's communication.

Is Reflecting Meanings a Mechanical "Technique"?

A frequent reaction to the group-centered leader's function of reflecting the meaning of members' statements is to denounce it as simply a mechanical and artificial technique, rigidly used in an unnatural or forced way by the leader. Viewed in this way, reflecting by the leader is perceived as a technique that group members will "see through" and dislike. The writer has heard the criticism, "Nobody wants to be responded to like a parrot." Then, too, there is the usual number of jokes, most of which are variations on the following theme:

> If a group member asks where he can go to get a drink of water, the group-centered leader is certain to reply, "You want to know where you can get a drink of water." This leaves the member both frustrated and thirsty.

It is true that the reflecting function can be a rigid and mechanical technique and may at first seem strange and unnatural to group members, especially under any of the following conditions:

1. If the leader is just beginning to try out this way of responding and has not learned it well enough to practice it naturally and easily.
2. If the leader does not sincerely want to listen with understanding to the meaning of others' contributions.
3. If the leader simply parrots the content (the actual words) of the speaker's statements, instead of using his own language to reflect the speaker's real meaning.

4. If the leader does not understand the basic purpose of reflecting meanings.

Experience in leadership training leaves no doubt that, in the early stages of learning this new way of responding nonevaluatively to others, leaders often do sound mechanical and unnatural in their attempts to reflect. Like a novice at golf, whose swing will at first seem unnatural and mechanical, the leader's first attempts at reflecting will be self-conscious and "forced." Like the golfer, however, he will soon find that he becomes more natural and less mechanical with his new skill as he gains experience through practice.

The leader will find it hard to carry out this function effectively if he tries to reflect when he does not genuinely desire to understand another's point of view. It is difficult (and certainly not completely honest) to convey verbally an attitude of understanding if one's real attitude is something else. Usually under such conditions the responder's words do not hide his real attitudes or intentions. Without the intent to understand, there will seldom be real understanding, and an attempt to reflect another's meaning will end as a parroting of his words rather than a mirroring of the real meaning of the spoken words.

Practice in trying to understand and reflect the meaning of members' statements gradually reduces the tendency to parrot their actual words. As a leader gains experience in carrying out this important function, reflecting will become second nature to him and his responses will become more and more characteristic of his own unique manner of speaking. In order to satisfy himself that he has understood, the more experienced leader will want to rephrase in his own words what others say. This becomes his only real test of the accuracy of his understanding of the other person.

Finally, a leader will be more effective in carrying out this function if he understands the purpose of reflecting and the part it plays in facilitating communication. Reflecting is simply a means by which a listener tests out his understanding and communicates this understanding to the speaker. In much that is communicated, the meaning is perfectly clear to the listener. Hence no test of his understanding is required, for he is certain he understands and the speaker is certain that he has been understood. A statement such as, "I read a book last night," would seldom call for a special effort to convey to the speaker that you have understood him. In fact, reflection of such a statement might seem strange and unnatural to the speaker. On the other hand, there are many times when a speaker needs to feel that his listener has understood — for example, when he is expressing something that is difficult to put into words (a deep feeling), or when he is uncertain that the listener actually could be understanding and accepting of what he is saying. Statements such as, "I was really upset by what I read last night," "For the first time in two years I read a book last night," or "I read something last night which supports my argument and refutes yours," might more appropriately be reflected by the listener in order to assure both listener and speaker that real communication has occurred between them.

A SUMMARIZING STATEMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE GROUP-CENTERED LEADER

To bring together all the various aspects of our description of the group-centered leader into a brief summary statement, we present below a list of highly condensed statements describing the philosophy and behavior of the group-centered leader. These statements represent only a current conception of this type of leadership, and it is recognized that such a description is bound to be modified by future experience and research.

In order to minimize the possibility of a misunderstanding of such highly condensed statements, we shall attempt to contrast the various components of the group-centered approach to leadership with similar components of a very different approach — one we have called for convenience a "leader-guided" approach. Our aim here is not to try to represent accurately another point of view, for this is risky business. Rather, we are using this device to highlight and clarify our own description of the group-centered leader.

Our list is not an exhaustive one, for it has been constructed to summarize and integrate the description in the present chapter, rather than to serve as a detailed and all-inclusive formulation.

TWO CONTRASTING APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP IN SMALL GROUPS

Group-Centered	Leader-Guided
Basic Philosophy	
1. Most effective group is one in which each member can contribute his maximum potential.	1. Most effective group is one in which each member can contribute his maximum potential.
2. Spontaneous and creative behavior of members will in the long run be of most help to the group.	2. Spontaneous and creative behavior of members will in the long run be of most help to the group.
3. Group has the capacity for making sound decisions and reaching effective solutions to its problems.	3. *Mature* groups have the capacity for making sound decisions and reaching effective solutions to their problems.
4. Group can best learn to utilize potential of each member when it is free from dependence on a formal leader or some other authority.	4. Group can best learn to utilize potential of each member by depending at first on guidance of its leader.
5. New group has the skills and capacities for self-determined, self-responsible behavior, but is afraid to use them.	5. New group may not have the skills and capacities for self-determined, self-responsible behavior, so it must be taught them by the leader.
6. Goals set by the group will in the long run be most beneficial to the group.	6. Goals set by the leader (of a new group) will be more beneficial in the long run, although eventually a group should be mature enough to set its own goals.
7. Change that is significant and enduring must be self-initiated change. Resistance to change will often result from bringing to bear outside forces and pressures.	7. Change can be facilitated by bringing to bear influence of leader's ideas, insights, and knowledge.

8. Democratic ends do not justify undemocratic means. Democratic behavior cannot be taught by undemocratic methods but only by experiencing democracy in action.	8. Democratic ends justify use of manipulative and authoritarian means. Leader must retain his authority in order to influence group to reach desired goals.
9. Change that is self-initiated will take place most effectively in a nonthreatening, accepting psychological atmosphere.	9. In a nonthreatening, accepting atmosphere group members are not likely to change without direction of some kind from the leader.
10. Leadership of a group is not the property or the sole function of any one person, but is conferred by the group on that member who can best meet its needs by leading it in a certain direction.	10. Leadership of a group should be vested in the person who has the most experience, knowledge, maturity, skills, insights, and so on.
11. Structuring of a group situation to contain "a leader" simply provides the group with an additional task, namely, either to assimilate the limits imposed by the leader or to depose the leader (physically or psychologically).	11. A group situation should be always structured in such a way that it contains "a leader." Groups demand structure; without it they will be anxious.

Principal Behaviors

GROUP-CENTERED	LEADER-GUIDED
1. Allows group to diagnose its own needs. Tries to facilitate communication in group during this process.	1. Finds out as much as possible about group's needs, in order to provide group with situation where it can get what it needs.
2. Allows group to plan its own experiences. Tries to facilitate communication during this process.	2. Plans specific learning situations and/or group experiences from which group may draw insights.
3. Avoids making decisions for	3. Makes decisions for group

group, except those which facilitate bringing members together initially.	when group seems too immature to make correct decisions.
4. Preparation involves doing things that will improve his own contributions to group.	4. Preparation involves doing things that will improve his own contribution and things that he feels group needs.
5. Tries to lose his special status position so that he can participate in decision-making without having his contributions given special consideration by group.	5. Uses influence of his special status position in group to bring about decisions or to guide group in certain directions.
6. Leaves responsibility with each member for participating. Tries to facilitate group's developing a permissive and accepting atmosphere by being as permissive and accepting as he can.	6. Facilitates participation by subtle or direct methods of involving each member in group activity.
7. Sets limits in terms of his own ability to be accepting of group action.	7. Sets limits more in terms of what will be best for group.
8. Wants to contribute resources just like any other member of group. Tries to avoid being used by group as *only* or *chief* resource person.	8. Wants group members to use him as the special resource person, and generally lets himself be used by group in this way.
9. Tries to understand members' expressed wishes for him to behave in some particular role, but does not always feel compelled to do so.	9. Usually accedes to members' wishes that he play some particular role or else tries to convince them that another role is best.
10. Tries not to influence others to play some particular role.	10. Often influences or directly manipulates members to play some particular role.
11. Tries not to think beyond the level of expressed understanding of group members, feeling that only meaningful insights	11. Often interprets group's behavior in order to give members understandings they might not acquire themselves.

will be those arrived at by members themselves.	
12. Tries not to be perceived as "the leader," believing that, as long as he is so perceived, group members will not be completely free to be themselves and often will react to his contributions either submissively and uncritically or with hostility and resistance.	12. Tries to be perceived as "the leader," believing that he will thus be better able to control the situation to meet group's needs.
13. Takes no special responsibility for seeing that group evaluates its achievement or its progress.	13. Takes special responsibility to insure that evaluative function is carried out in group.
14. Tries to lose his "official role" in order to be free to resist group's needs for dependence and to reduce his own anxiety about the outcome of group action.	14. Tries to reinforce his "official role" in order to have more influence on the group action.
15. Takes no special responsibility to reduce anxiety, to resolve tension, etc. Feels such elements are inevitable consequence of group interaction.	15. Takes special responsibility to reduce anxiety and to resolve tension. Feels such elements hinder group purposes and should be avoided.

The Impact of Group-Centered Leadership: Some Problems for the Leader

9

In the last chapter we examined closely some of the distinctive functions carried out by the group-centered leader during the initial stages of the group's development. As might be expected, his role usually has a sharp impact on the group, especially because it is so different from that to which the group members have been accustomed. Since the group will react strongly to this type of leadership, the group-centered leader should be prepared to expect certain predictable consequences of his approach. Furthermore, this unique role confronts the leader with a number of difficult problems that are seldom the concern of the more traditional leader. Principally these are problems arising out of the interaction between the leader and the group members during the period of the group's adjustment to the new kind of leadership. This chapter will introduce the reader to some of the typical reactions of groups and to the kinds of problems that will face the leader who tries the group-centered approach. Again we draw heavily upon the Workshop experience for our examples of reactions to the leader.

REACTIONS OF THE GROUP TO THE LEADER'S ROLE

All groups respond somewhat differently to group-centered leadership, yet certain reactions might be called typical because they occur so frequently. If a leader is at least aware of certain reactions that he may expect, they are not so likely to upset and discourage him.

THE GROUP'S INITIAL INERTIA

Almost all groups will demonstrate a degree of inertia when they are first confronted with a leader who does not immediately begin to run the group. Because of their past experiences in other groups, the members have certain expectations about how the leader will behave. They may expect him to convene the meeting, present or suggest an agenda, introduce problems for discussion, call on members for comments, control or guide the discussion, or carry on any number of activities traditionally thought to be the functions and prerogatives of the formal leader. When the leader does not meet such expectations, it is understandable that the members will not be prepared at once to assume responsibility themselves for the effective operation of the group.

One of the first manifestations of the group's inertia is the initial pause following whatever introductory remarks the leader may choose to make. When the leader first demonstrates that responsibility rests with the total group, the members often are so stunned that no one speaks for a time. Although such a pause seldom lasts for more than fifteen or thirty seconds, to a leader who is not accustomed to this initial reaction it may seem more like five minutes.

It is at this point that the leader is tempted to discard his original intention to allow the group full responsibility. He may become embarrassed by the period of silence and begin to make suggestions. He may feel uncomfortable and fearful that the members feel he is letting them down or that he is not being a very effective leader. He may be tempted to "structure" — to give some intellectual explanation of his role, trying to justify this new approach.

If, however, a leader is aware of what is going on in the minds of the members at this crucial point, he may be more inclined to "wait out" the pause. First, the members need time to recover from the realization that they have to go to work. Then, too, each member is probably hoping that someone else will break the ice first, with the result that for a time no one speaks up. Possibly everyone is mentally scurrying around for some appropriate suggestion or contribution, inasmuch as no one came prepared to think (at least not quite as soon as this). For these reasons it is necessary to allow the members time to recover and to become active participants.

Leaders with experience in this approach inevitably discover that the group members usually find the initial pause more discomforting than do the leaders themselves, so that one of the members is almost certain to start the ball rolling before too much time has elapsed. Consequently, if a leader can find within himself the security or confidence to wait out the group, someone will begin to speak and the group thereupon will have taken its first step toward maturity and self-direction. On the other hand, if the leader feels he must break the silence, then the group's first step toward self-responsibility is just that much delayed. It will probably be no easier for the group to assume responsibility the next time it is given a chance, and the leader may feel even more uncomfortable in his next attempt to transfer the responsibility to the group, once having experienced the group's initial reluctance to take over. For these reasons there seems to be a sound argument for allowing sufficient time for the group to assume responsibility at the very outset.

Despite the advantages which some leaders feel are inherent in this approach, it is perhaps accurate to state that each leader must use whatever approach is consistent with his own attitudes and convictions. Some leaders may want first to try out an approach that is a less drastic departure from tradition. Perhaps each leader has to decide for himself what approach seems to fit with his own experience and attitudes. The best criterion for the leader may simply be the extent to which he can feel comfortable with whatever approach he chooses, for if he tries an approach that makes him tense and anxious, this feeling will usually be communicated to the group, and the members will begin to feel the same way. On the other hand, if a leader can feel relaxed and comfortable in letting the group take over at the outset, he will be amply rewarded by the discovery that a group can and will become self-directing and self-responsible from the start, if only given the opportunity by its leader.

THE GROUP'S FIRST TASK

Most people have had very few opportunities to be members of a group which is allowed to take over at the outset without some directive help from a formal leader. When eventually they find themselves in this situation, they are often at a loss to know how to proceed. This is the situation that confronts the group-centered leader when the group begins to go about its first task — that of deciding where to start or what to do first.

Although each group will tackle this problem in its own way, certain characteristics of the process are common to most groups. Generally one member will make a suggestion as to what the group might do first; for example, "I suggest that we determine what we want to get out of this group." Invariably this suggestion is made directly to the leader, and the other group members expectantly turn toward him for some evaluation of it. If, however, the leader responds in some such manner as, "You are suggesting a kind of inventory of our needs," the group finds itself in the position of responsibility for evaluating this suggestion. Sometimes no evaluation is made, and the suggestion is left hanging in mid-air. Neither those in favor of the suggestion or those opposed to it express how they feel, and no one seems inclined to do anything to implement the suggestion. Even the person who proposed the idea feels at a loss, for he has not been given sanction by either the leader or the group. This state of affairs perplexes the group, to say the least.

Contrast this situation with the usual one in which the leader responds to a member's suggestion by (*a*) evaluating it positively or negatively, (*b*) taking steps to determine how others feel, (*c*) calling for additional suggestions, or (*d*) taking steps to carry out the suggestion. Such actions on the part of the leader are likely to influence the members to accept or reject the suggestion, to relieve other members of the responsibility of making additional suggestions, or to remove the opportunity for the group to determine for itself whether everyone is in agreement with the suggested procedure. In other words, the usual responses of leaders to an initial suggestion often have the effect of bypassing some important stages of the group's development or of reducing the chances that the group will assume responsibility for its own decision-making.

By responding to members' suggestions nonevaluatively, the leader leaves it up to the group to consider the merit of different suggestions and to decide which one it wants to carry out. This will be a slow and painful process for most groups, because their members have not learned how to do this *as a group.* Faced with this problem, most groups at first exhibit considerable ineptness and become frustrated and impatient. Sometimes this frustration manifests itself indirectly, but often it is expressed directly and clearly by the members, as revealed in the following excerpt from a personal interview with one of the members of the summer Workshop immediately after the second meeting of the group:

> *A:* I think that as the meeting went on, the first half up to the time we broke up this morning, I think I felt, in addition to last night's anxiety and pressure and frustration, I felt the same thing mounting in me this morning.
>
> *Interviewer:* I see — a frustration that we are not getting along fast enough, is that the kind of feeling you had?
>
> *A:* Yes, yes. And again it sort of reflected last night's inability to finish the job. Then I wondered, I was curious in my own mind, to what extent the frustration of the group might have been a frustration from doing an incomplete job. . . . Now I don't know whether what I felt was a real perception of the group's feelings, but I felt there was a good deal of distress this morning. I know that I felt it, and it seemed to me — maybe because I felt it maybe I projected it.
>
> *Interviewer:* You're not sure whether it is just your own feeling or whether others shared it.

The Workshop also demonstrated that some group members do nothing at all during this stage, preferring to let others cope with the problem while they watch from the sidelines. They secretly hope that someone will come up with something to relieve the group's anxiety. Another delegate describes his reaction to this early phase in his personal interview:

> *T:* Well I'd like to begin today by referring to yesterday's feeling that there was incipient frustration in the group, which I think is certainly verified objectively today. . . . It means that the group has evidently tried . . . well, first of all it means there are a variety of interests that can't be met at one time. That's prob-

> ably a definition of frustration. . . . I made a count this morning, and four times, or rather four individuals expressed the notion that we either ought to have a leader to pull us into line or a committee to do the same thing. . . . I don't think it's too different from saying, "Let's have a committee whose function will be to control us." It sounds a little bit more democratic, but I'm not sure that there is any basic difference.
>
> *Interviewer:* It might be just a symptom of the same thing.
>
> *T:* Yeah. Now given the frustration and this being one response to it, there is also another response that I can see. That is — I think I did this myself — sort of pulled out of the thing — not in the sense of doing something else (like writing a letter during the meeting), but rather pulling out in the sense that I'm kinda waiting for something to happen. . . . Pulling out of it in a sense of not being able to participate.

Another delegate felt a confusion and "lack of continuity" in the early Workshop discussion, stating his feelings during one of his daily personal interviews. Clearly this delegate also feels a strong need for a single leader who would give the group direction:

> *B:* There's no continuity even about the contributions. If a perceived leader had been there and a person made a contribution which seemed to be leading us astray, the leader could have said, or just asked, "In what way does that relate to the statement made by so-and-so preceding you." And if it didn't [relate], I think the person would perceive that and kind of bring it back around. In other words, we wouldn't keep going off in that direction.
>
> *Interviewer:* It seems that unless someone is designated as the leader, is perceived as the leader, this doesn't happen by itself.
>
> *B:* No. I think if there are leaders, the person who is does it. As long as everybody in the group is involved fully as a participant no one takes the responsibility for guiding. . . . I don't think he ought to withdraw himself, but he should at least be conscious that he has a function to perform which is to keep this group on the track. Of course we had several leaders this morning who came up and tried . . . but different people perceive the thing in a different way. So if one leader is trying to summarize and then

> another leader arises and summarizes it differently, the thing is still. . . .
>
> *Interviewer:* This kind of leadership is happening in the group but it's not consistent, not driving ahead in an orderly fashion.
>
> *B:* I think it would be better if there were just one perceived leader. I don't know — I'd like to see it tried — I might find myself not liking the idea of having a leader up there doing that, but I think it would be worth trying.

These last two delegates sensed the confusion and lack of direction in the group's first meetings, and both give evidence of the presence of a strong need for a leader. Apparently, when a group first experiences frustration and confusion and its members begin to look for solutions to this problem, they often tend to pick the solution that relieves them of responsibility — namely, they want a single leader. It is interesting that people seem to feel that only if a member is first designated as "the leader" will he have a "right" to help provide direction for a group. In other words, if a person is simply a "member" of a group, he does not feel free at this stage to make contributions of the kind he feels the group needs. During this early stage, then, the functions of leadership — those functions which will help the group reach its objectives or solve its problems — are not yet distributed throughout the group; they still are associated in the minds of the members with the leader *role* or *position.*

Frustrations are felt not only by group members but also on occasion by the leaders themselves, as evidenced by the comment recorded by one of the Workshop staff in his personal journal:

> I was very much surprised about myself today. I can't understand why I've become so involved in the frustration of the total group and in my own personal frustration over our lack of planning or over the length of time it is taking us to plan. I don't quite know what this means in myself. Have I a desire for structure so that I feel uneasy without it? Am I concerned as one of the staff members that somehow form be found for our operating together? Is my patience level lower than that of the rest of the group members? I know that I was partly mad at myself for not being able to clarify and help the group, and my frustration was therefore a personal one as well as a bewilderment about the total group and its members.

During this early period of frustration and indecision, a number of activities can usually be observed in the group:

1. Some members may overtly show their frustration by sighing and fidgeting or by "pushing the group" to make a decision. Some members may repeatedly say, "Let's decide," or "Come on, let's get going, let's do something."
2. Other members may continue to make other suggestions for action, hoping that they will hit upon the one suggestion that the group will accept.
3. Others may focus their attention on the suggestions that are brought before the group, evaluating each one as it comes up.
4. Others may simply be content to say nothing and to play the role of passive observers of this complex process.
5. Some members may make procedural suggestions, hoping that the group will adopt some specific procedure for arriving at a decision.

This period of deciding where to start is often quite chaotic. No one knows what to do to help the group arrive at a decision. Nevertheless, few groups will tolerate this stage of unstructuredness for very long. Once they begin to realize it is the job for the group as a whole to make decisions, the members quickly respond to this challenge by arriving at some kind of tentative decision.

True, the group's first decision is often a very minor or limited one, yet it represents a very significant accomplishment for people who are not accustomed to self-directed group action. Furthermore, the effect of the group's first decision on the leader is to give him the confidence he needs in the group's capacity for continued responsible decision-making. Once he has observed the group make a decision, he is much more likely to trust it in the future.

Despite the fact that no set of principles has yet been developed and rigorously tested as a guide for the behavior of group leaders, we can derive from our observations and experiences certain learnings which may be useful to others as they try to help groups work through the frustration and chaos of their first meetings.

1. The leader should try to avoid evaluating the merits of members' early suggestions. Negative evaluations often make members

fearful of offering their suggestions, and positive evaluations often influence the group to accept passively the first suggestion offered.

2. He should try to listen attentively and understand accurately each suggestion, testing his understanding by reflection or restatement. This improves communication, because it often makes the speaker restate his suggestion more clearly. The leader's reflection also frequently helps the group understand the essential meaning of suggestions.
3. When a suggestion is made that will require the leader to do something, he should not jump to carry out the suggestion, but rather should wait until the total group indicates its approval.

Direct Appeals to the Leader

One of the most common reactions of members to the group-centered leader is to appeal directly to him for help and support. When the group begins to experience frustration and impatience with its lack of progress, some of the members immediately turn to the leader either to appeal for direction and guidance or to request his intervention. In the writer's experience, this is one of the most difficult problems with which the leader is confronted. It is at this stage that he will find his faith in the capacities of the group for self-direction severely tested.

Such appeals take many different forms. First, there is the appeal for him to tell the group how other groups have started. Members will ask the leader to inform them of the procedures and decisions that other groups have found beneficial. Some members may ask for a summary of the research findings which they hope will furnish the answer to the problem facing the group. Another kind of appeal takes the form of a direct request for the leader to "use his experience" and tell the group how to get started. Frequently a member will suggest how the group might first proceed and then ask the leader, "Don't you think that is the best thing to do?" Occasionally a member will put his appeal in the form of, "Why don't you tell us what you want us to do?", indicating a belief that the leader has some secret plan or intention.

The daily personal interviews conducted throughout the Workshop period enabled the staff to observe first-hand the strong needs felt by some of the members for a leader who would control the situation. The following excerpt from one of these recorded interviews illustrates how intense these dependency needs can often be. This group member has been expressing his "disgust" with people who, in his opinion, talk too much:

> *B:* So I think that — I don't know, it isn't because I don't want to give these people their chance, it's just that I don't understand why someone doesn't shut them up. I would have taken Gerald and shoved him out the window. I'm an authoritarian. I would have told him he was talking too much and he had to leave the room. . . .
>
> *Interviewer:* It is a feeling of wanting somebody to take a more active role and really submerge these people. . . .
>
> *B:* Yes. I think that group discussion ought to be led by a person who simply will not recognize these people after they have interrupted about eight times. . . . My prejudice is one that favors a leader in a group discussion who will submerge these ever-recurring (to me) asses who simply cannot play a cooperative game. I detest — I understand that is a very strong and ill-proportioned word — but I resent going to football games and seeing a star.

Further on in the interview the same theme recurs:

> *B:* I just think that it is pointless to have a group without a leader. That just bothers the life out of me and has ever since I started this.
>
> *Interviewer:* I see. It ties in with your early feelings about a leaderless group.
>
> *B:* Yes. Otherwise who is going to formulate the thing well enough so that we come to any conclusions or so that we don't repeat ourselves, which to me, about 2:30 this afternoon, we started doing — repeating and repeating and trying to clarify and clarify. Well, I just don't like it.

It may be of interest to note that this member withdrew almost completely during the early sessions of the group, refusing to participate in any way. Coupled with his need for a strong leader to control the talkative members was a reluctance to take any positive action himself. Apparently it never occurred to him that anyone other than the leader could assume some responsibility for making a contribution that would help the group develop control and direction of its activities. For him, control of a group's discussion was a function reserved exclusively for a leader.

The dilemma facing the leader is whether to answer direct appeals and encourage further dependence of the members on him or to avoid answering them and run the risk of provoking resentment and hostility toward himself. Essentially this is the dilemma of authority wherever it is found. A father finds himself put in a similar situation when his child asks him to make some decision that the child finds difficult to make. The business or industrial supervisor has trouble deciding whether to answer appeals from a worker or try to help him work out his own solution to a problem. The teacher is often torn between giving the answers to students and encouraging them to discover their own answers. The counselor or therapist is continually bombarded with appeals from the client to make decisions for him. To provide such direction for the client frequently invites further dependence, but to refuse an answer to these appeals often provokes hostility and anxiety.

There is no single answer to this complex problem. Nevertheless, the leader who is willing to try a truly group-centered approach feels a need to resolve this dilemma for himself. Two different aspects of this problem might be considered. First, there is the question of whether or not the leader actually knows what is best for his group. Then there is the question of the meaning of the appeal to the member. Each of these points requires further explanation.

A leader is often asked to make decisions for his group which he cannot possibly make because of the limitations of his knowledge and experience. Appeals such as the following are good examples:

"Tell us the best way to start."
"What should we do first?"
"Shouldn't we take a vote now?"

It would be presumptuous of a leader to think he has the answer to such questions, yet many leaders jump in with answers. The temptation is strong to play the role of the "magic helper," especially when the members apparently are willing to cast the leader in such a role. If leaders can sensitize themselves to the extent that they are able to recognize unanswerable questions and can develop a healthy sense of their own limitations, the tendency to jump in with an answer will be greatly reduced.

There are other kinds of appeals to the leader which might be thought of as "vehicles for the expression of feelings," rather than merely as requests for help. Often a person's appeal for help carries with it an expression of his own feeling of helplessness or frustration. For example, if a member says to the leader, "Why don't you settle the matter for us and tell us what we should do?", he is probably feeling, "It is frustrating for us to try to reach a decision, and it would relieve the discomfort to be told." If the leader can sensitize himself to listen for the underlying feelings that are often being "carried" by the appeal for help, and if he conveys his understanding and acceptance of such feelings, this is often all that the member needs. He will feel understood, even though his question goes unanswered. Experience both as a therapist and as a group leader has convinced the writer that most direct appeals for help ("Please help me") carry the feeling, "I need help" or "I feel helpless." Once the person feels that the therapist or leader understands and accepts his feeling of helplessness, he is usually more than glad to escape the threat of being given advice. To the writer it is a real question whether people ever really want to be advised or told what to do. Mostly they want to feel understood.

The preceding remarks are not intended to imply that the leader should never answer appeals for help. There seems to be no reason why the leader cannot make suggestions which he feels might be helpful to the group, provided the request is for information or facts which he possesses, and provided he does not immediately answer each appeal without first responding to the feeling aspects that may be present. Furthermore, as we shall emphasize later, once the leader has become a member (lost his leadership position), and the group has lost its dependence upon a single leader, questions can be answered by the leader without harmful effects upon the group. It is especially during the early stage of the group's development that the leader should avoid jumping in to answer appeals from the members.

Hostility Toward the Leader

The person perceived as the formal leader of a group is a target for considerable hostility from the group members. Some of this hostility has no relation to the behavior of the particular leader; he is merely the symbol for authority to which members transfer earlier-learned emotional reactions to parents and other authority figures. Every leader should expect a certain amount of hostility directed toward him, regardless of the kind of leader he is trying to be.

One might expect, however, that the possibility of hostile reactions to the group-centered leader would be lessened because he is trying to avoid being the authority for the group. In actuality, the group-centered leader probably provokes as much hostility as other kinds of leaders, at least during the initial stages of the group's development. This is because members project onto their leader the need-fulfilling and protecting attributes of parents and parental figures, as Fenichel so clearly describes:

> Every human being has a dim recollection that there were once powerful, or, as it must seem to him, omnipotent beings whose help, comfort and protection he could depend upon in time of need. Later, the ego learns to use active means of mastering the world. But a passive-oral attitude as a residue of infancy is potentially present. Often enough the adult person gets into situations in which he is again as helpless as he was as a child. . . . He then longs for just such omnipotent protection and comfort as were at his disposal in childhood. (23, pp. 491–92)

If the leader fails to meet such expectations of the members, he is likely to arouse their hostility and resentment. Clinical evidence supports the notion that a leader can provoke hostility not only by directing but also by *failing* to do so. Authority, wherever it is symbolized, commonly invokes ambivalent reactions. People both want to be controlled and fear being controlled.

Thus an initial reaction of group members to the group-centered leader is often hostility and resentment when he fails to meet their basic dependent needs for guidance, protection, and direction. Such hostility is often expressed openly and directly, but also may be partially repressed so that it shows up only indirectly. It may take the form of a sharp criticism of the role of the leader, an attempt to engage him in an argument, or an open threat, such as was expressed by a seventh-grader in the first meeting with a leader who was attempting a group-centered approach:

> (*Shouting at the leader*) You'll be licked if you don't control us right at the start. You have to keep order here because you're older than us. That is what a teacher is supposed to do. If he doesn't do it we'll cause a lot of trouble and won't get anything done. (*Referring to two boys scuffling in the corner*) Throw 'em out! Throw 'em out! You've just got to make us behave!

Although the hostility is not always this strong, the group-centered leader needs to be prepared to recognize it when it occurs and to be secure enough in his role to accept it. The writer knows no better way to convey acceptance than to restate or reflect the essence of the member's feelings without adding any judgment or evaluation. For example, a possible response to the statement of the seventh-grader would be:

> You are puzzled and perhaps mad at me for not keeping order like a teacher, and you feel I just *have* to make you behave or else you'll cause trouble.

More mature and sophisticated group members may express their hostility by trying intellectually to persuade the leader to change his behavior. They will use arguments and logic to support their thesis that groups need strong leaders and that leaders who are experts and authorities in their field are justified in telling the less informed group members what they should do. Or they may bring in historical evidence for the need for strong leaders. Such arguments can be quite persuasive and can lull the leader into believing that the members really need his direction and that he is justified in exerting his influence, at least for the moment. The very fact, however, that the leader is usually the *only* one singled out by the group for criticism of the role he is playing is usually evidence that the leader still occupies a unique position of status and authority, so that a contribution from him will not yet be evaluated on its own merits but rather on the basis of his prestige. Consequently, the leader's acquiescence under the pressures exerted by the members will usually impede the group's progress toward freedom from an irrational dependence upon him.

One further observation about hostility toward the leader might be made. Many leaders are easily threatened by an expression of hostile feelings from a member — possibly because feelings of any kind are commonly thought to be symptoms of ineffective group functioning. Our culture bombards us with warnings about expressing feelings. From every quarter we hear, "Keep feelings out of it," "Be objective," "Keep this on an impersonal level," "Don't ever bring personalities or personal feelings into a discussion," and so on. These attitudes are particularly prevalent in industrial and business groups, in groups focusing upon learning knowledge, and in so-called action groups where the emphasis is on tangible accomplishment. In these and other groups in our society. feelings, emotions, personal attitudes, affective responses, and intimate relationships are often felt to be foreign and disruptive elements in group life. Counteracting this cultural pattern is the growing awareness among social scientists and practitioners that people change, learn, and function together effectively in those group atmospheres in which they *do* become emotionally involved and in which they *can* express and act out their conflicts with others. Group experiences that prove the most significant seem to be those in which people learn to examine the underlying emotional components of these relationships.

There is reason, then, to suggest that a leader who discourages the expression of feelings and attitudes may actually limit the potential value of a group experience for its members. On the other hand, a leader who can be genuinely accepting of feelings directed toward him opens up another avenue of learning for the group. He creates an atmosphere in which members can learn about themselves — how they relate to others, how their feelings and attitudes influence their ideas, how their relationships influence the kinds of decisions they make, how their feelings toward the leader affect the nature of their own participation, how dependence upon the leader can inhibit their own creativity, and countless other learnings which are of vital importance for both the individual and the group as a whole.

Out-of-Group Appeals to the Leader

A common reaction of some members to the early floundering is to contact the leader when he is out of the group, most often for the purpose of influencing him to exert more control or to change his role in some manner. The writer in his capacity as leader of different groups has been confronted with numerous suggestions from group members, ranging from urgent pleas that he throttle the participation of a talkative member to subtle suggestions as to how he might persuade the group to take some specified course of action. A member of a training group recently approached the writer after the first meeting in an attempt to get him to change his role, and when it became clear that he was not succeeding he angrily made the accusation that this method of group leadership was nothing more than a cover-up for the teacher's lack of knowledge of the subject matter.

One way of dealing with these out-of-group appeals is to listen with understanding to the request but then suggest that it is a matter for the entire group to discuss. Or simply conveying understanding will often encourage the member himself to work through the problem and decide to bring it back to the group. Sometimes it is desirable to spend a good deal of time with such a member. Individual conferences frequently help him deal constructively with feelings and attitudes that previously prevented him from being an effective group member. For example, a student asked the writer for a personal conference following a class meeting during which the class had decided to write term papers on topics selected by the students themselves. This particular student began the interview with a direct appeal for an assigned topic. It was apparent that he was upset because he had to make an independent choice. By listening, understanding, and resisting the pressure to give the student a topic, the writer helped him bring out the following feelings:

> "I have never written a term paper on a topic that represented my own interest."
>
> "I don't know what interests I have in the area covered by this course."
>
> "I don't know what topic will be acceptable to you, the teacher."
>
> "I suppose I am trying to find out what topic will get me a good grade."
>
> "I am apparently taking this course for a grade."
>
> "I take all my courses just for a grade."
>
> "I don't know what it means to write a term paper that would please only me."
>
> "I try to learn what I think I am supposed to learn."

The interview enabled this student to examine these fundamental attitudes, and he came to the conclusion that his education had been a pretty shallow sort of thing. He finally decided to pick a topic that really interested him. Had the writer by-passed his self-exploration by immediately assigning a topic, he would have reinforced the student's strong pattern of dependency and denied him the opportunity to have his first experience of learning and thinking independently and creatively.

Out-of-group appeals to the leader represent merely another manifestation of group members' dependency and their resistance to a leader who tries to facilitate the emergence of self-responsible and creative participation from his group. It is one of the paradoxes of group behavior that members will actively resist the authority of a leader, yet at the same time resist becoming free of his authority.

SOME DIFFICULT QUESTIONS FOR THE LEADER

Just as many different groups show common reactions to group-centered leadership, so do many leaders raise the same questions about carrying out the role of the group-centered leader. Shall they call the group meetings to order or let the group do it? When does the leader contribute his special information or skills? What does the leader do if the group decides it wants him to take full responsibility? Does the leader ever express his own feelings? These are some of the questions most often asked by leaders as they begin to try a more group-centered approach.

No definitive answers can be given. Groups and leaders differ in so many respects that what holds true for one situation is not always applicable to another. At the present stage of our knowledge about leadership, about all that can be done is to point out certain dimensions of these problems and to suggest some of the ways they have been dealt with.

Shall the Leader Call the Meeting to Order?

One of the first questions raised by the leader who is new to the approach is whether he should be the one in the group to call the meetings to order (and, similarly, to adjourn them). If the task of the leader is to allow the usual "leadership" functions to become distributed, should he not allow the function of convening and adjourning meetings to be taken over by any member of the group? It certainly seems consistent with the theoretical position of the group-centered leader. Naturally one would suspect that retention of this function by the leader would tend to reinforce his differential position in the group and impede the process of distribution of functions. Furthermore, there is the fact that therapists utilizing a group-centered approach with therapy groups rarely, if ever, deviate from the procedure of allowing the group to start spontaneously.

On the other hand, most groups, because of the previous experience of their members, expect to be called to order only by the perceived leader. For this reason it is difficult for leaders to conceive of giving up this traditional leadership function, or, more accurately, to conceive how a group can get along without this necessary formality. It is not surprising, then, that many leaders are torn between a position that seems theoretically consistent (letting the group carry out the function) and the more traditional position which makes them feel more comfortable.

Because it often helps to know that something has already been tried successfully, a brief account will be given of the way this problem was handled by the staff of the summer Workshop. As indicated previously, the staff convened the first meeting of the group with a brief résumé of what they had done before the delegates assembled. At the second meeting one of the staff leaders felt a need to call the group to order and did so. At an evaluation session of the full staff group immediately after the second meeting, the advisability of doing this was questioned, and it was finally agreed that we might subsequently allow the members of the group to assume this function. Though to some of the staff it seemed that we were unnecessarily and too rigidly following the tenets of our theoretical position, our discussion at least made us aware of the possible effects of calling each meeting to order. As a consequence, the staff at the next few meetings waited long enough to see if the group might not convene itself.

What the Workshop did was recorded in the daily journal of one of the staff:

> I was interested that by 9:05 (the meeting had been called for 9:00) the group almost "centered down" in true Quaker fashion without a leader. Just before there was complete silence one of the members led off on reporting for the "collating committee." I'd like to see if this "centering down" happens again.

The centering down, to which the response of the Workshop group was likened, is a process characteristic of Quaker groups in which the members of the meeting, without any action by a formal leader, gradually diminish their initial social conversation until there is absolute silence. At this point, each member knows the meeting has begun, and anyone speaks who feels a need to do so. A similar process developed in the Workshop and continued throughout. Sometimes, however, a member would rap on the desk or speak out with, "Let's get started."

This experience at least demonstrated to the staff and to the members that a group need not be formally convened by a leader. It supported the hypothesis that the group would take over this important function, if given the opportunity by its leaders. It was the conclusion of the staff that relinquishing this function to the group helped greatly to make members of the leaders and potential leaders of the members.

Does the Leader Ever Make Contributions?

A question almost certain to be asked by the leader attempting a group-centered approach is whether the functions of this type of leader are limited entirely to listening to others, reflecting and clarifying their contributions, conveying acceptance, and linking related contributions. Does the group-centered leader not have the opportunity to contribute his own creative ideas and particular skills to the group? Actually, this is one of the most frequently misunderstood aspects of group-centered leadership. It shows up in the attempts, pointed out earlier, to equate group-centered leadership with laissez-faire leadership. It is thought to require a passive, noncontributing role on the part of the leader. In the most distorted interpretations of group-centered leadership, the leader is described as doing nothing but repeating what the members say. His groups, it is believed, are bound to be chaotic and undisciplined, and discussion invariably rambling and never to the point. But worst of all, it is incorrectly inferred that the knowledge and experience of the leader can never become available to the group with this type of leadership.

Part of the reason for this misunderstanding is the failure to see the leader's role as a changing one. As more and more of the functions traditionally performed by the leader are taken over by the members of the group, the leader actually acquires *more* freedom to contribute creatively to the group. No longer is the leader perceived as the only one with responsibility for preparing the agenda, for limiting discussion on some particular problem, for being the parliamentarian, for handling talkative members, for discouraging irrelevancies, for setting time limits, for reminding the group to speed along to problems on the agenda, and so on. Such controlling functions become shared responsibilities in a self-directing and self-responsible group. Anyone and everyone in the group may perform them when necessary. Under these conditions the leader can be a more creative contributor of his ideas and skills.

It takes time, of course, for the group to assume these functions. And it is during this early stage of the group's development that the leader is concentrating much more on facilitating communication, creating an accepting atmosphere, and encouraging the participation of the members, in contrast to giving information or contributing his ideas. During the early stages he is performing functions which facilitate the distribution of the traditional "leadership functions," and as these actually become distributed the leader gradually begins to perform other functions, which might be called "members' functions."

Experience in many different groups, and particularly in the Workshop group, has convinced the writer that the problem of the leader's contribution is a very complex one. It seems quite clear, for example, that the group-centered leader, even during the early stages of group development, will experience conflicting feelings. He will feel a need to play a "therapeutic" and facilitating role, but he will also feel strong desires to make positive contributions to the group discussion. How to achieve the proper balance between these two roles is perhaps the most crucial problem for the leader. This was documented in the personal diary of one of the Workshop staff leaders. During the first week of the Workshop he wrote:

> More than ever it was emphasized in today's home group how my own eagerness to "make a contribution to the group" can be a deterrent to the participation of the other members of the group. In this group several members expressed a need to consider breaking up into two small groups in order that "everyone would have a chance to participate." It seemed to me that my chickens were coming home to roost in this case. Although no one in the group expressed a direct feeling that I had contributed to the lack of participation by some of the members, I sincerely felt that I probably

> had. When I expressed this to the group, there were several members who expressed very strong feelings — such as, "I'm glad you have participated," "You should have something to contribute and I think your contributions are a distinct help to the group." Here again is the same dilemma which I feel I have been facing throughout the Workshop. What is the balance between the two extremes — one, excessive leader participation, and the other, no leader participation at all. I am quite certain that even though I may not be perceived by the group as a leader, even being perceived as a group member I run the risk of making people feel that their contributions "couldn't be as intelligent and as wise as mine." Apparently in the group there are some people who feel desirous of the contribution I can make. At the same time there are people who may be desirous that I make a contribution but who unconsciously restrict their own participation because of the nature of mine. Or could it be that even the people who are openly expressing the need for my contribution are in actuality ambivalent about this?

It is apparent that this leader was struggling within himself to discover the proper balance between his desire to facilitate participation of members and his need to make contributions of his own. He is aware that his participation can inhibit others, and sometimes he responds primarily to this feeling. He is also aware of his own needs, and often acts in terms of them. Nevertheless, he feels conflict at times over the most appropriate way of participating.

Certainly there are at least three factors which influence the effect of the leader's contributions. The first is the degree to which the members of a particular group are dependent upon the leader. In a very dependent group, the leader's participation will inhibit member participation much more than in an independent group. Second, the leader's contribution of his own ideas is more likely to inhibit member participation during the early stages of a group's development than during the later stages of the group's maturity. Third, the manner in which the leader expresses his contributions will greatly influence their effect upon the group.

Awareness of this third factor is apparent in a later diary entry of the same staff leader quoted above:

> In my home group this morning I found myself teaching. This I feel sorry about. . . . There is such a temptation to step in and

> provide them with my experience, and I have the feeling that unless I can put a check on myself the atmosphere of our home group is going to be seriously affected. . . . On occasion I have found myself talking somewhat dogmatically as if I were teaching. This bothers me somewhat. I think I should try to understand what is behind this. One explanation would be that I believe so strongly in some of the principles that I have articulated in my personal theory of group leadership, I give out with these principles in a way that conveys that I have the answer. Rather my attitude should be, I have *an* answer that seems consistent and appropriate for *me*.

Several days later he refers again to his manner of expression:

> One thing that I have noticed about my contributions here at the Workshop is that they are generally statements of a principle, an observation, or an idea; they are rarely contradictions of other people. I don't think that I have made many contributions which have been characterized by the attitude, "I disagree with you" or "I think you are not accurate in this." This is encouraging to me because at times in the past I think this would not have been true.

This leader is probably correct in sensing that his attitude, as manifested in the way he expresses his ideas, is an important determiner of the effect of his contributions on others. Perhaps it is the most important determiner, although often, no matter what a leader's attitude might be, certain group members may be so insecure and dependent that any contribution from the leader will be either threatening or inhibiting. This, incidentally, is why therapists so consistently refuse to give information and advice to clients, for the usual client feels such a lack of confidence in his own judgment that he is only too willing to depend upon someone else's.

If, then, during the early period of the group's life the leader has been successful in striking a balance between the group's need for expression and understanding and his own need for participation, one can predict that the group will become more independent. This in turn will make it less likely that the leader's contributions will inhibit others or will affect the group out of proportion to the real worth of the contributions. Consequently, as the group becomes more mature, the leader becomes more free to introduce his ideas into the group, and the group becomes strong enough to reject them or accept them on their own merits. Finally, the members become secure enough to check the leader if his participation inhibits that of others in the group.

This complex problem, however, is never completely solved for a leader, no matter how mature the group. He will always have the problem of "striking the fine balance." This became clear in the Workshop when, in the second week, the group had moved far toward becoming a self-directing and mature group. Yet one of the staff leaders found himself still struggling with the problem of his own participation, as revealed in his personal diary:

> At the end of the total group planning session, I felt very satisfied personally. I had not at any time felt uncomfortable or tense in the group; and I perceived during this total Workshop session that the group was really solving its problems and making decisions effectively. I still feel, however, that there is some tendency for me to participate too frequently. This feeling was with me at the end of the evening total Workshop session. Here I would like to state again my basic dilemma of the Workshop, "What is the balance between spontaneous participation and concern for the other members in the group?" During this session for the first time I actually perceived some hostility directed toward me. Whether this was due to the position which I was attempting to articulate or to the manner in which I presented it, I am not sure. Yet I was somewhat amazed when several members of the group came up to me afterwards and commented on how they appreciated my contribution. One other evidence of the interest in my contribution was the spontaneous formation of a group of six or seven around my corner at the end of the session. This group continued for at least half an hour beyond the session and I think I'm right in saying this is the first time I've observed this happening, especially after evening sessions. Yet I must admit that as I was walking home that night I felt certain pangs of guilt that I had been too vociferous in stating my position. What does this do to a group, when one member talks so much?

Here is an unusually frank expression of a leader's conflict between his own need to participate and his need to permit others to participate. Although the conflict exists, it is likely that his willingness to examine it and struggle with it will make him more sensitive to the effect of his own participation. His awareness of the problem at least increases the possibility of his finding the proper balance between listening and contributing.

How Are Factual Questions to Be Handled?

One of the stumbling blocks for the leader experimenting with a group-centered approach is learning how to handle factual questions asked of him by group members. This problem is particularly acute in learning groups where it is perceived that the leader possesses more facts than anyone else in the group; but to a degree it is a problem in all groups that rely to some extent upon discussion.

Concretely, the problem for the leader is whether to answer all questions and run the risk of increasing dependency on him or to try out different responses which tend to encourage group participation but at the same time evoke some resentment and hostility toward him. If a leader simply answers every question, experience shows that this reinforces his role as an expert, provides for the members a convenient defense against thinking seriously themselves about the questions, and eventually turns the group situation into a kind of quiz show with the group members as the question-asking audience and the leader as the panel expert. Especially are these effects noticeable in group situations in which the leader is already perceived as having more status, prestige, knowledge, or experience. The members are often only too willing to remain passive listeners rather than involve themselves in the learning process or the problem-solving activity of the group.

On the other hand, leaders are so accustomed to allow themselves to be cast into the role of expert or question-answerer that they are seldom equipped with alternative methods for handling direct questions. Though they may be aware of the consequences of having the group cast them in this role and be reluctant to play it, they may be uncertain how else they might handle questions. Furthermore, it is difficult for some leaders to adopt other ways of responding to questions because of the threat of how the group members may respond when the leader's behavior is not what they expect of him. This threat is not entirely an imaginative one, as we have already seen, for groups often react with considerable frustration, resentment, and hostility to the leader who does not immediately behave as he is "supposed" to behave.

Certainly no principles can be stated that will apply to all groups or even to all situations that arise in a single group. How a leader might respond to a particular question will depend upon many factors, such as:

1. The stage of development of his changing relationship to the group — that is, the extent to which the members are still dependent upon him.
2. The nature of the question — that is, whether or not it is a question that can be answered.
3. The feeling or meaning underlying the question. As pointed out in another context, questions can often be simply a "vehicle" for the expression of a feeling or underlying meaning, and thus the questioner may not even expect it to be "answered."
4. The extent to which the leader has need to be perceived as an expert. An insecure leader, for example, may find it too threatening to be perceived as one who might not know the answers.

These are probably only a few of the many factors which can operate to influence the way a leader will respond to a particular question. For this reason, we cannot expect to do more than suggest some of the responses that have been found useful from our own experience and possibly speculate on why they seemed useful.

If a leader is asked a question that he cannot answer, his response will be different from a response to a question that he can answer. This seems an obvious truism, yet it is not uncommon for leaders to think they must attempt some answer to every question, or else lose stature in the eyes of the members. As a result, such leaders find it difficult to say, "I don't know the answer to that," or "Can anyone in the group answer that question?" Responses such as these demonstrate to the group that the leader is more interested in helping the group reach good solutions to its problems than in enhancing or protecting his own prestige.

Even when a leader can supply the answer, other factors may make it more appropriate for him to avoid doing so. Often if he restates the question so that its meaning is clarified and made more explicit, the questioner himself or others in the group will attempt to provide an answer. If the leader provides an immediate answer to a question, some members, reluctant to match their answer with his, will withhold their contributions. Others will begin to find fault with the leader, because they can be more comfortable in the role of critic than in that of creative contributor. It will help the leader judge whether his responses are facilitating or inhibiting to the group discussion if he pays some attention to the nature of the members' participation — that is, if their participation is essentially critical and reactive to him, it would pay him to withhold his contributions.

The manner in which the leader answers questions greatly influences the effect upon the group. Some leaders convey by their manner that there is only *one* correct answer and they have it. Others have a knack of responding in a way that conveys, "This is only *my* answer," or "Here is *one* answer, but I'm sure some of you have others." Leaders who consistently respond in this way are not simply using a technique, but rather possess certain attitudes which make them aware that there can be many other ways of perceiving and interpreting the same reality. A leader's manner of answering questions, then, is a function of his basic attitudes rather than a consciously applied technique.

The Process of Group Development

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The initial impact of group-centered leadership, as we have seen, is often a kind of disorganization for the group and frustration for the group members. Both of these initial reactions subject the leader to difficult stresses which tax his personal security and severely test his faith in the group-centered approach. This initial phase might be characterized as a period of *dastructuring*, during which the old patterns of group organization and behavior break down and the group finds itself sorely needing new patterns.

Once the group has weathered the stormy period of destructuring, it soon begins to restructure itself through learning new ways of organizing its activities and solving its problems. It emerges from its initial disorganization and confusion into a period of constructive development, which is rewarding to both the members and the leader. The group learns new methods of decision-making and new modes of communication; the members experience a new sense of strength and a feeling of freedom; they acquire new attitudes toward themselves and toward each other; they try out new roles in the group; they begin to perceive dynamics of group behavior which they never knew existed; and they experience a new relationship to authority, in the person of the leader. In short, the group undergoes a dynamic process of change.

The characteristics of this process of change are probably different for each group. Many factors influence both the nature of the process within a particular group and the kinds of changes that occur. Human groups, like human beings, differ widely in their reaction to the same set of conditions. Nevertheless, it may be possible to discover some patterns of change common to almost all groups, although admittedly the science of human groups is still too much in its infancy to permit broad generalizations. For the present, something can be learned from careful observation of single groups. In this chapter we shall report the observations that were made of the process of change as it occurred in the summer Workshop, inasmuch as a fairly systematic effort was made to record a number of different kinds of observations of this particular group.

The research-minded reader may want to refer again to Chapter 5, where the methods of the Workshop experiment were described. These methods provided the chief sources of information upon which we are depending for the analysis of the process of change described in this chapter. As will be apparent, most of these methods provide data of a purely subjective or clinical nature, as opposed to objective and experimental data. To some extent, then, our analysis of the process of change in the Workshop group is based upon what the delegates and the staff *thought they observed*. This is both a liability and an asset.

The staff, for example, might have been influenced by their own personal biases with regard to what they wanted to happen in the group. Committed to a particular theory of leadership, it is not unlikely that the staff leaders were trying to perceive evidence of the positive effects of their own leadership. The fact that some of the staff observed and reported some actual negative aspects of their leadership makes it less likely that their observations were influenced by their expectations. Nevertheless, any evaluation of the staff observations must take into account the possibility of the staff's "selective perception."

As regards the delegates' reports, a further word of caution is necessary. One is justified in asking whether the delegates altered their behavior (or merely reported changes in their behavior) to fit their ideas of what the staff as observers wanted to see. Just how great the observer's influence can be in a social situation is illustrated in the industrial experiments at Hawthorne (75). In one instance reported by these investigators, the workers even had pre-arranged signals for announcing the presence of an observer. In his presence they deliberately altered their rate of productivity. The Workshop situation, however, does not parallel the industrial situation under analysis in the Hawthorne experiments. The delegates to the Workshop did not feel the same kind of threat from the staff, except perhaps at the very beginning. There was not the same kind of "resistance to outsiders" that is characteristic of industrial workers under observation. Furthermore, the delegates themselves were given the authority to decide whether the research project would be carried out, and each participant in the research was a volunteer. These factors, coupled with the general atmosphere of freedom and acceptance that pervaded the Workshop, operated to minimize the tendency of delegates to report what they felt the observers wanted them to report.

Compensating for the potential biases in our clinical-type data are the advantages of this type of data, especially in a social experiment like the Workshop. Objective and statistical data often lack the richness and dynamic quality of clinical material, inasmuch as the former require the investigators to abstract from the total situation only certain very specific aspects that lend themselves to precise measurement. Clinical methods such as the interview and the personal journal, on the other hand, are more likely to provide data about the complex and subtle characteristics of the total situation. What they lack in objectivity and precision they make up for in richness and scope. Another advantage of the clinical methods is that they rely primarily upon the spontaneous and unique interpretations of the subjects themselves, whereas objective methods usually require that the investigator select the particular variable or dimension on which he wants data. In the Workshop experiment the delegates were relatively free to observe and record whatever they wished. This meant that the investigators obtained data about the experience as perceived by the delegates *from their own frame of reference*, and as reported in their own terms.

One final caution must be stated. This has to do with the extent to which generalizations can be made about different kinds of groups on the basis of interpretations of the data obtained on a single group.

The Workshop group was unique in some respects. It was made up of delegates who were highly motivated to learn — it was a "training" group of mature adults voluntarily seeking ways of improving their skills and knowledge. Thus it was different from typical classes in an educational institution, for example. The Workshop group was relatively free of the kind of limits and requirements imposed upon groups which operate within the structure of a large authoritarian organization. Thus it was different from a classroom group in that there were no examinations to be passed or grades to be earned. On the other hand, the Workshop group contained people with diverse interests and experiences, and certainly with different needs and expectations. There were young adults as well as middle-aged persons of both sexes. Probably most of the members came expecting a traditional classroom learning experience, although a few expected the Workshop to duplicate their previous experience in a nationally known leadership training program. The group was homogeneous to the extent that all had an interest in leadership and group life, and the majority were connected with some religious organization or religion-oriented group (such as the Y.M.C.A.). In general, one could describe the Workshop as a group of intelligent men and women, motivated to learn how to be better leaders, looking to the staff to provide them with an opportunity to acquire information and techniques.

THE PROCESS OF BECOMING A SELF-DIRECTING GROUP

Group-centered leadership strives to transfer responsibility for the direction of a group from the leader to the total group (including, of course, the leader). One would predict, then, as one of the outcomes of group-centered leadership, that the group will become more self-directing — that the group, rather than its leader, will decide upon its objectives and will direct its activities in such a way as to accomplish those objectives. This rarely occurs suddenly. Most groups go through certain intermediate stages on the way to self-direction. The Workshop showed how a group experiences a process of change from a state of dependence and helplessness to one of confident and effective self-direction. Some interesting events were observed along the way, however, and it became clear that this transition was not a smooth and easy one. Earlier we described the initial frustration of the members and their appeals to the leader. The group also seems to go through other observable stages during the process of becoming self-directing.

THE DISBELIEVING STAGE

Frequently some of the group members react to group-centered leadership with an attitude of disbelief. They at first distrust the leader's sincerity in permitting the group to become responsible for its own destiny. They cannot believe that the group-centered leader really means what he says. They interpret this unique approach to leadership as a clever device for manipulating the group. One member of the Workshop expressed his distrust when he congratulated one of the staff leaders on developing such a successful method of "getting groups started." He saw the approach as a clever device for getting quick participation, after which the leaders could influence the members to move in the direction the leaders felt desirable for the group. Another delegate revealed his distrust in his second personal interview:

> *B:* Yeah, the work the staff did before the Workshop is really important in all this. You were involved in that, and at least I know there was some time spent and that you people did something — even talking. But you don't really come out in the open with it. . . . The thing I'd like to know is what kind of plan goes into an unplanned Workshop.
>
> *Interviewer:* You know that planning was done, and yet it's a completely new kind of. . . .
>
> *B:* It isn't very apparent. I don't know. I'd like to know. I'd like to hear the recordings of everything that went on in all this planning — I think it is. When I say it seems unplanned, I share Jim's opinion that you're manipulating, that you're doing it very cleverly. . . .

A third delegate expressed in his personal interviews a suspicion that the leaders were directing the group in a subtle manner:

> *E:* . . . But I think he [Leader A] is taking on the functions of leadership. By that I mean he's trying to impose his will on the group just the way [Leader B] is.

> *Interviewer:* You feel they are both moving toward imposing their ideas on the group.
>
> *E:* Yes, I think they do it more often, not that they do it all the time. . . . I don't know why I should be suspicious of him [Leader B]. I'm very anxious to get to talk to him at any rate because he's interested in much the same things that I am.
>
> *Interviewer:* But you feel he has motives behind the kind of participation he carries on.
>
> *E:* To an extent. I don't think he's trying to get anything out of the group. I think he's interested in moving the group along, so to speak, and that's why he tends to structure things for us. . . .

Still another was quite open in expressing his distrust of the staff, whom he saw as deliberately holding back information in order to keep the group as naïve as possible, thus producing the effect the staff secretly desired:

> *R:* We resent the growing pains, for we want to learn from your experience. Don't you see, there's always that in your plan. We can't understand why [Leader B] doesn't let us benefit from his experience. He wants this to be an experience, so he withholds. . . . He's like a file cabinet that's been opened, a treasury that is dwelling in our midst, and we're not getting anything from it.
>
> *Interviewer:* The feeling you're expressing there I gather is that this is kind of a planned and deliberate effort on the part of the staff to withhold from the group in order to keep it naïve so that it would behave in some way that we hoped it would.
>
> *R:* That's right. I think perhaps, I don't mean that you deliberately did this, but I think you hoped that some phase, a vivid common occurrence would happen. Out of this we would grab the hook and line, and an upset would occur which would give us a sense of need. Then we would orient ourselves to that upset and explore its possibilities.

This same delegate expresses his distrust again in a later interview:

> *R:* I asked you once if you had any motives and you weren't willing to say "yes." So I wasn't convinced that you hadn't. So I started reading everything you had written, trying to look for

> them. I'll give you a very honest opinion — I don't see any. But I don't believe you. . . . I have found nothing to indicate what I'm looking for . . . but I'm also saying I'm looking for it because you said you were a psychologist.
>
> *Interviewer:* I see. That touched off something in you, and because of your earlier experiences you were wondering what my game is.

These perceptions of the delegates were substantiated by the observations of one of the staff leaders, who wrote in his first day's journal:

> It seems to me that the group has been testing the staff in a great many ways, trying to discover if we really do mean what we say when we have given them the responsibility to share all decisions with us. . . . Along with this there has been a kind of resentment of this type of leadership. They seem to feel it is right but they also feel it is impossible — that groups are never like this back home and that somehow this is just an ultra-skillful technique we are using which they will finally discover is manipulative, only in a much more clever way than any type they have used before. . . .

These observations of both delegates and staff strongly suggest that the Workshop group went through a brief period of disbelief, suspicion, and distrust. Because the members were so accustomed to a different kind of leadership, they found it hard to believe that the staff members were being completely honest and sincere. Consequently, there was a period during which the leaders were being carefully tested. The members had to be sure they weren't being fooled. The final test came quite suddenly and unexpectedly on the second day of the Workshop. The events of this day are worth reporting in some detail, because they illustrate clearly how the group's disbelief dissolved with the discovery that the leaders were genuinely willing to accept the group's decision about a matter that was of real concern to the staff.

Some months prior to the Workshop, the staff planned a series of research studies to be carried out with the group, and had received a grant to support the project. To an extent we as a staff felt a real commitment to carry through on this proposal. We agreed, however, that we would abide by the decision of the total group as to whether the staff would be permitted to use the delegates as subjects. The studies as planned also required the delegates themselves to engage in certain research tasks.

On the first day, as the group began to plan its schedules, the staff told the group that they would like to be allocated a couple of hours on the next day's schedule for the purpose of presenting our research plans. This was done, and on the following day one of the staff leaders briefly outlined the research proposal, explaining to the delegates why we would like them to agree to participate. Several of the delegates interpreted this as evidence that the total group was not really free to decide its own destiny, and many felt the staff leaders were pressuring them to participate in the research. One delegate sarcastically asked, "Does the University feed its guinea pigs?" Another delegate found the courage to test the staff with, "What will happen to you guys if we decide not to participate in your research?" The answer he received was that the staff would be disappointed and perhaps somewhat embarrassed by not carrying through a project for which funds had been allocated, but that we would unhesitatingly junk the research, if that should be the decision reached by the group. Immediately the resistance disappeared and the group unanimously agreed to participate, later even suggesting another project it might carry out, one not included in the staff's proposal. One of the staff recorded his impressions of this meeting in his daily journal:

> I thought the absolute honesty with which [Leader A] confessed having taken responsibility away from the total Workshop group (through planning the research beforehand) was most heartening to see. . . . The general attitude (in the group) was, "Well, this is going to happen to us regardless of what we feel about it." It wasn't until Leo raised the question of, "What will happen to you guys if we decide not to participate in your research," and got the answer that we were willing to accept a "No," that the group really came alive and felt they had a decision which was clearly being placed in their hands. I found the response of Jack at this point symbolic of the response of the total group. He said he had felt up to this time that he was simply being called upon to give assent to something the staff had already decided, but when he realized the decision was really being left up to him, he came alive. So did the whole group. . . . There was a high degree of motivation to go ahead and this could only be accounted for from the fact that the

> research had been presented as an opportunity which they could take if they wanted. By expressing their willingness to do so, they involved themselves in the decision, in the project, in its conduct, and in its results.

This incident from the Workshop illustrates how a group can at first be skeptical about the sincerity of its leader's intentions to place authority with the total group. It also provides an illustration of how the members try to test the leader's integrity, and yet how quickly they will move out of the disbelieving stage if the leader can be honest and show a willingness to trust the group, even with decisions upon which his own security depends.

THE LURE OF FORMAL PROCEDURES

During the initial stages of group development, especially when a group is struggling to solve its first problem, it often tries to seek refuge from the existing chaos and from its own internal tensions by grasping for formal or mechanistic procedures. Finding a lack of structure in the group discussion, a group seeks escape in formalism and "official structure." The reasons for the tendency to escape into formalism are complex, because formalism stems both from factors within our culture which encourage and reward it and from certain needs within individuals which suppress informality and spontaneity. Nevertheless, the lure of formalism is a phenomenon that is observable in many groups, and one that has direct implications for the leader as he attempts to help his group become more responsible and mature. It is, therefore, a phenomenon that will be given closer examination at this point.

Formalism can be defined as the tendency for members of a group to "resolve problems by utilizing organizational forms, rules and structures which are not appropriate to the problem at hand." (3, p. 9) The formalistic group member, in order to avoid the frustration and tension of a loosely defined and unstructured problem situation, tries to find a rule, a mechanical technique, a device, a structure, or an established procedure. Examples of some of the things that can be used as formal "crutches" are many: formal officers, agendas, organization charts, parliamentary procedures, rigid delegation of duties, standing committees, formal seating arrangements, titles, and so on. Though none of these need always be symptomatic of formalism in a group, they frequently are — to the extent that they inhibit spontaneity and creative participation or prevent a group from analyzing its problems directly and working through to appropriate decisions.

One theory proposes that formalism has its roots in certain cultural patterns which promote emotional suppression. The typical middle-class person, for example, adopts goals of prestige which can be reached, so he is taught, primarily through individual effort. Relating oneself to others — through expressing love and intimate feelings — is often not perceived as the means of getting ahead. Instead, the individual achieves by being independent of relationships with others — by suppressing his personal feelings and putting on a front of affability, charm, and confidence. Another middle-class value that inhibits emotional expression is conformity. Spontaneity, uniqueness, and individualized emotion are punished, and the individual tries to learn certain roles which he thinks others want him to play. (81, pp. 16–18) Finally, middle-class parents, because they tend to rely on child-rearing practices that are more restrictive and authoritarian, are apt to foster in their children tendencies toward self-control, self-discipline, and the intellectual solution to problems, and to instill the belief that these are the most important means for achieving success and status in our society.

With such cultural forces acting on individuals, it is not surprising that many become inflexible, conforming, and rigid in situations involving relationships with others. They learn to see the emotional elements in the world as threatening. "They fear emotion in themselves as well as in other people. To control emotion they construct formal responses by which they arbitrarily *wall in* situations." Alpert and Smith in their excellent analysis of formalism point up clearly the relationship between the tendency to suppress emotion and formalistic behavior in group situations:

> An unstructured situation induces anxiety because the new elements in the situation call for some spontaneous emotional response. . . . The analytic or destructuring stage of participation threatens the formalistic compulsive [person]. He has no frustration tolerance for this unstructured period. In this stage, healthier people depend upon informal emotional ties; but the compulsive participant, unable to tolerate the openness of this period, forces a

> formal solution of problems before they are adequately defined. He searches for those formal aspects of the problem which he can control and avoids analyzing the specific situation to determine the appropriate response. (3, p. 11)

A clear-cut illustration of the initial lure of formalism was provided by the Workshop. When it became apparent to the delegates that the staff leaders had not planned exactly how the Workshop should begin, suggestions gradually began to emerge from the members of the group. Almost all of the first procedural suggestions were formalistic. These included: immediate lectures by the staff leaders in which they should concentrate on "defining their terms"; use by the group of formal "self-evaluation forms" which had been used by another Workshop attended by one of the members; and a procedure for going around the circle and obtaining formal introductions from each member of the group. Suggestions such as these can be characterized as formalistic in that they are highly structured, lacking in spontaneity, borrowed from previous situations, and conducive to the suppression of personal feelings.

Often a group will find it uncomfortable to be without a formally designated chairman. Electing or appointing one somehow makes the group feel safer, inasmuch as a chairman is somehow supposed to insure order, to prevent irrelevancies, to channel the discussion, to handle deviant members, to reduce conflicts, and so on. A similar formalism is expressed in the tendency to believe that all groups need a "group observer," a person specially designated to make observations about the dynamics of the group process and to report such observations to the group. Having experienced a group situation in which an observer was useful, some people seize upon this procedure as a requirement for all groups. It is most unlikely, however, that borrowed procedures will always be appropriate to the unique task of a particular group.

Groups may resort to many different kinds of formalism in their attempt to escape the tension which is evoked by informality, spontaneity, and lack of structure. Reference can be made to the "blackboard syndrome":

> A group under tension which it cannot resolve by discussion responds avidly to a suggestion that the issue be clarified by listing problems on a blackboard. . . . The trap appears to be that any

> member may shout out a subject for the blackboard but no group discussion occurs about whether the subject is relevant or not. The blackboard list therefore represents little of group needs but only the needs of individuals at the moment. . . . Much discussion has frequently taken place about the proper sorting of the blackboard subjects. Finally, the group agrees on how priorities should be accorded the subjects listed. It is remarkable that after this procedure the group proceeds to ignore the problems it has posed on the blackboard, presumably because the list has no meaning for it. It seems that the blackboard activity is a safe method for avoiding tension, and once it has served this purpose, has no other meaning.[1]

A similar mechanism may lie behind a group's tendency to construct elaborate agendas. The group hopes by this procedure to prevent chaos during the initial period of determining goals and deciding action. Often, however, the agendas are not even followed once the group has carefully constructed them, again because prearranged and formalized procedures are seldom appropriate to the ever-changing needs of a group in the process of dynamic development.

The implications for the group leader of the phenomenon of formalism in a group are twofold. First, by recognizing the tendency he will be less likely to seize upon formal procedures as an escape from the discomforts he feels during the initial chaos and floundering of the group. Second, the leader will find that many of the suggestions for formal procedures made by individual members will be evaluated and rejected by the total group, if he leaves the responsibility for decisions up to the total group.

Evidence that groups can and will reject formal procedures, when the responsibility for deciding the group's procedures is not assumed by the leader, was provided by the Workshop. Not only during the initial stage of planning but also throughout the total three-weeks' life of the group, few of the usual formal procedures survived the test of appropriateness and meaningfulness. There was a conspicuous absence of agendas, use of the blackboard (used only once for laying out a schedule of meetings, a task requiring visualization of time periods), group observers, group recorders, chairmen of meetings, techniques of evaluating the effectiveness of specific meetings, standing committees, and so on. In the judgment of the Workshop staff, the procedures that actually were employed, emerging as they did from total-group discussion, could be characterized as functional, informal, and unique to this particular group's requirements. There was even a very limited use of role-playing throughout the Workshop, a procedure that has become somewhat of a vogue in this country but one which often is used by groups as a defense against examining and discussing *real* feelings and attitudes.

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[1] From an informal and unpublished document written by Tom Main and Marie Nyswander for the staff of the Third National Training Laboratory for Group Development, Bethel, Maine.

A brief excerpt from one of the recorded individual interviews with a member of the Workshop captures his impression of how the atmosphere tended to foster group evaluation rather than uncritical acceptance of formal procedures. He is talking here about "post-meeting reaction sheets," a formal technique advocated by many leaders as a standard procedure for almost every kind of group. At the first meeting of the Workshop group, one member had tried to sell the idea of a standard form of a post-meeting reaction sheet. Because the leader did not impose his judgment, the group itself decided against the use of this form.

A: . . . I mean, to take an instance, I had never thought until I got here that there could be a very real difference of feeling about such a thing as a post-meeting reaction sheet. In two sessions in one of our subgroups I think I've come to understand more of people's feelings about such matters than I did in three weeks at this other Workshop. There we just did it. We did it — we didn't like to do it — we did it.

Interviewer: You were kinda accepting it, even though you didn't like it, because the impression was gained that this was the best way of doing things, is that it?

A: That's right, that's stating it very well.

Interviewer: Here, I gather, there is more flexibility in evaluating these things for what they are really worth.

A: Here people seem to say — two people in particular — they seem to say, "Well now, before you decide to do it let's see what this will do to people's feelings," and we begin to interpret and re-create what it will do. And you see almost instantly that some people — I mean, I respond to that because I think I did this, and it was all hidden. That is, I wasn't aware of the fact that I felt resistance to post-meeting reaction sheets. And then

> it comes out when you begin to look at it. I think in the beginning I was all in favor of going along with post-meeting reaction sheets.

It seems clear that this member was experiencing something different in a group situation, and this experience enabled him to acquire certain new learnings: (*a*) that the effectiveness of formal "group techniques" might be questioned; (*b*) that the feelings of the members of a group are a significant factor to be considered; (*c*) that a group can be permitted by its leader to exercise a critical function; and (*d*) that the atmosphere of some groups can actually cause a member to hide his true feelings — in this case his feelings of resistance to the post-meeting reaction sheet.

One of the staff leaders in his personal diary recorded a somewhat similar observation of the absence of "institutionalized roles" in the Workshop:

> One observation which is of importance about our Workshop group is the fact that we have seldom, if ever, had either a recorder or an observer appointed by the group for a particular session. Similarly the group has never officially appointed a chairman for any of its particular sessions, nor has the group institutionalized self-evaluation. Now here are four techniques, or call them institutionalized roles, which are thought by some group investigators to be of primary importance for an effective group. It is significant to me, however, that when these institutionalized roles are not imposed on the group by its leaders they don't seem to emerge. It seems to me that this has tremendous theoretical implications. Apparently when a group is allowed to become self-directing, structure grows out of function. In groups that I have observed where these institutionalized roles were imposed upon the group by its leaders, the group invariably would come into its session and say, "Shouldn't we have a recorder?" "Shouldn't we have an observer?" "Shouldn't we have a chairman?" "How much time shall we take for self-evaluation?" and so forth.

The Impracticality of Self-Responsibility

The observations and comments of some of the Workshop delegates revealed another stage in the group's development. Once the members were certain that the leaders had nothing up their sleeves, they began to look at the idea of a self-directing group more rationally. A common reaction at this stage was a feeling that a self-directing group was perhaps sound as an ideal but impractical in reality. This attitude took many different forms, one of which is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with a delegate:

> *B:* I don't understand all this yet. I'm just beginning to, but the point I raise is how far do you actually go in leaving everything to the discretion of the group. I think if you really trust the thing, you trust it; and if you don't, you don't. . . . I see this problem more definitely in a church situation where people have not been trained to expect this kind of leadership and where they have certain expectations of you as a leader. . . .
>
> *Interviewer:* You're gonna be faced with a group of people who expect something different out of you and. . . .
>
> *B:* Yeah. Trying to resolve this thing frightens me a little bit because I'm becoming more and more convinced that this *is* the way.

Other delegates found reason to be skeptical of self-directing groups because "we were all pooling our ignorance . . . and these other guys didn't know any more than I did and I knew very little." Still others resisted the idea on grounds that the group could not be as productive and efficient:

> *D:* I think it either changes the whole atmosphere or — well, it seems to me that if we had one obstructionist in the group our productivity is going to be lowered. . . .
>
> *Interviewer:* You see that the emphasis on this concern for persons would get in the way of any productivity, in terms of output of the group. . . .
>
> *D:* . . . I'm not sure that it is the most effective way to operate, which is not saying that it is not the best way to operate. It's interesting — in industry some of the more progressive managers have come to the conclusion that to respect the individuals, the employee, actually heightens his efficiency and they get more production. I've heard this, but I'm questioning it now. . . .

The fact that it took the Workshop group a long time to come to certain decisions about scheduling its meetings discouraged many of the delegates — and, incidentally, some of the staff. As we shall point out later, the group's first attempts at decision-making were clumsy and time-consuming. Many members simply withdrew, in all but the physical sense, from the group, probably feeling at a loss to know how to help. Others kept trying to discover more efficient ways of solving the problems of the group, but frequently they experienced real discouragement and impatience with the group's slow locomotion. One of the delegates in an early interview discussed his reactions during this period at some length. Perhaps his own rather confused and disorganized statements will convey better than a restatement the authentic flavor of what he was feeling:

> *D:* . . . There's two weeks left but we don't have a lot of time if we're going to take this week just to decide whether we're going to have visitors or not. I'm exaggerating but I feel that other things like that will come. . . .
>
> *Interviewer:* But you somehow feel that we've got to stop taking hours to decide things because it's keeping ourselves from this content you want to learn about.
>
> *D:* It's time we developed folkways that we could naturally evolve out of the group — ways of handling things rather quickly, that shouldn't consume too much time. I didn't feel this morning that we've arrived at a common agreement of what these folkways are. As a result I found myself, as I sat listening to the discussion, thinking that if I threw an idea into the discussion it might throw us into confusion. I mean here's something that hasn't been suggested — a good idea — and I would deliberately not say it because I would be hoping that we would decide the issue one way or the other right now. This isn't good.
>
> *Interviewer:* You find yourself holding back in order not to hold the group back.
>
> *D:* Yeah. You don't want to throw a monkey wrench into it.

INITIAL FEAR OF PERFORMING LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS

Group members are at first afraid to perform leadership functions. Even after they realize that the group-centered leader is not going to decide things for the group and is willing to have it make its own decisions, there is a period during which most of the members fear taking any responsibility for initiating action.

A number of factors operate to produce this initial fear. Some members are afraid of appearing in competition with the formal leader. They may want to make a contribution or initiate action in the group, but somehow are afraid that the formal leader will resent this, or that other members will reject them as presumptuous in thinking they can perform some of the leadership functions. Many group members apparently feel like the Workshop delegate who said that he was certain that he knew what the group needed at a particular point in one of the meetings and that he would have helped the group out *had he only been the leader*. This person was saying in effect that he had no right to try to influence the group because he was not its perceived leader.

Another delegate discusses in his daily interview his reluctance to do anything that might influence the group:

> *B:* . . . It seems to me at this point I have the feeling I would like to be an authoritarian leader and take the group by the scruff of the neck and say, "Now look here, let's sort of straighten out here and see what's going on, and let's see if we can't pull ourselves together and see why there's a sense of apathy — why is it that a lot of us feel frustrated." But you can't do this. Therefore I feel that I don't want to bring this up in the meeting tonight because if I did it would just be throwing another monkey wrench in the thing. . . . This is what I think these people are feeling when they say they "want to get at it." I think the reason they dislike to schedule is because it keeps them from "getting at it." Yet no one — no member of the group — feels, "I should have some responsibility for seeing that we do this." But I don't know how to do it. I think everyone wants to do something but we don't know how to do it.
>
> *Interviewer:* You see yourself as having an equal responsibility in this dilemma, and yet you are not sure how you should operate to. . . .
>
> *B:* I'm always brought back to that when I start talking about *the group*. The *group* doesn't see this or the *group* doesn't see that, or *we're* not doing this or that. I guess I'm a member of that group.
>
> *Interviewer:* It's hard to look at yourself rather than the group when you come up against this problem.
>
> *B:* I think in the dynamics of a group there is a tension between seeing things as a responsible participating member of a group

and the fear of being responsible to the extent that you push or force what you consider to be your responsibility. I think it's a very fine line of distinction. I think a lot of us have withheld what we should have told the group, because we didn't want to become too responsible for the destiny of the group.

Interviewer: In other words you have withheld your honest feelings because you're unwilling to assume the responsibility that the expression of those feelings would entail.

This excerpt provides an intimate glimpse of the struggle within this group member as he experiences a need to contribute constructively but is held back by the fear of assuming too much leadership and responsibility.

Group members gradually begin to analyze and evaluate the role they are playing in the group. Upon discovering that "it is *really* up to the members" and that the group climate is one in which they can safely make contributions, they begin to take over leadership functions, one by one. Even some of the unique and distinctive functions, at first performed by the group-centered leader alone, are taken over, as illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview:

C: One insight that I got this noon, when I was talking with Marie and Jim and Keith, was that probably my role during the course of the Workshop might be described at the outset as doing a poor job of being a group member. Partly from ignorance, partly from my needs for acceptance and recognition or what-have-you. But I played a role of bringing in ideas and saying, "Let's get something done." That provoked the reaction from a number of members — namely, "I do not want to go along at all now." And I feel that if I wish to find acceptance and understanding and agreement — if I'm as interested in agreement as I am — then I'll have to play this role of understander and accepter and linker in groups. . . . Through this I can provide the conditions for getting listened to myself. I feel I have not been quite clear as to how this role can be played until this noon. . . . I knew it was necessary but I just didn't know how to play it. Like last night when Jim got so overheated, I really wanted to play the role of understanding him but I just didn't know how to get it because it was going so fast.

LOCUS OF RESPONSIBILITY BECOMES FIXED IN THE GROUP

Although it often seems long in coming, eventually the locus of responsibility comes to be taken over by the group. This is one of the most gratifying outcomes of group-centered leadership: once a group emerges from the painful period of destructuring and learns to solve its problems, once it gets a taste of autonomy and self-direction, it seems that it never again wants to lose the responsibility it has painstakingly acquired. Becoming self-directive, for a group, as with an individual, appears to be a kind of irreversible process. One of the staff leaders at the end of the first week of the Workshop expressed this well:

> This group has become so self-responsible and independent that, should one of us on the staff actually try to take over and run the group, he would be tossed out on his ear.

Another staff leader at the end of the third day of the Workshop made the following entry in his personal journal:

> I have been utterly amazed at the extent to which the group has become a self-directing one. My fears of the first evening have been supplanted by a faith that the group is well on its way to becoming a self-responsible and self-directing group. They have accomplished in two or three days what I had expected would take many days. . . . They have in effect ordered their own lives.

The Workshop situation illustrated how quickly a group can assume responsibility for its life, provided its leaders are willing to give it the chance. This group took over the responsibility for planning its entire schedule for the three-week period; it set up topics for meetings; it planned how it should break down into smaller groups for part of the time; it scheduled and planned for its own recreation; it selected the guest speakers it wished to hear; it planned and scheduled visits to certain resource centers on the university campus; it planned a program of formal presentations by certain of the staff leaders; it chose its own special committees; it made rules about admitting visitors to the Workshop meetings; it planned a banquet and a program of humorous skits at the conclusion of the Workshop. These are only a few of the many decisions and objectives reached by the group. The overall picture was quite clear — the group took full responsibility for determining how it would organize its life during the entire three-week period. The Workshop came to belong to the group.

One of the staff described in his journal a meeting of the total group in which the group was doggedly accepting the challenge of becoming self-directing, despite the frustration involved in doing so:

> The group discussion in the evening almost became frustrating. Most of us were very anxious to get into something. We felt that we had spent long enough as a total group together, and we wanted to get into a situation where all of us could talk, where the pace of our procedure could be changed. We thought we could get places more quickly in smaller groups, and so I suspect there was a certain amount of impatience and frustration through the latter half of the evening's discussion. We were not quite clear how we would implement our decision; and since there was no recognized leader of the group, various members attempted to take us off into all kinds of directions. And there was the inevitable proposal that we quit trying and let some all-wise committee decide for us. It is a tribute to the growing power of the group that it refused to do this, insisting that we fight the thing through together. What seemed to me at the time an overconcern that no one feel pressured seemed later to be a fairly important step in our growth, since it made clear that as a group we do not want to prevent a single member having something significant to do while in an interest group. Thus again the respect and concern for each individual became more important than the goal of getting into interest groups.

On the third day a group member wrote the following succinct comment in his daily journal:

> In the afternoon session it first dawned on me that the group was a "self-determined body" and hence different from all other such groups that I had ever taken part in.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE LEADER

In a previous chapter we described the *initial* role of the group-centered leader and suggested that this role gradually changes as the group itself learns to become responsible and self-directing. This change can be characterized as a process by which the leader becomes more of a group member — he loses his formal leadership position and in a very real sense gains *membership* in the group. This seldom occurs at once. Typically the leader's role changes gradually — often almost imperceptibly; and as we shall see from the Workshop experience, the transition is not always a smooth one for the leader.

TRANSITION FROM LEADERSHIP TO MEMBERSHIP

During the initial stage of the group's development, the group-centered leader limits his contributions primarily to those responses which tend to create an accepting climate and facilitate communication. At this stage he is attempting to remove the barriers to participation on the part of group members. For him to contribute suggestions or ideas when the members are still overly dependent on him would inhibit their participation. He cannot become a fully functioning member of the group until the members gain sufficient security to accept or reject *his* contributions just as they do those of other members of the group. However, once the members begin to perceive that it is *their* group and not the leader's, once they sense that it is safe for them to make contributions, once they feel certain that the leader has no secret objective for the group — then they will begin to perceive the leader more and more as merely another contributing member, whose ideas are sometimes helpful and sometimes inappropriate.

How does the leader know exactly when the members have reached the stage of perceiving him as another member? He never knows *exactly*. Yet there are certain cues which indicate the approximate readiness of a group for a change in the leader's role. One of these cues is the extent to which the members look to the leader to take the initiative in starting the discussion. Often the leader senses this expectation — perhaps the members turn their eyes to him, or merely sit in silence. One of the leaders of the Workshop recorded an instance where this seemed to be occurring; he was present as a member at a meeting of a small committee (the first formed by the group):

> When I got into the small morning group, set up for the purpose of assessing the needs of members and suggesting some structure for

> the organization of the Workshop, I somewhat sensed that the members of the committee were expecting me to take the initiative as the leader. I decided to sit it out and wait until they wanted to tee off. Both Jim and Marie immediately started off by asking what we were to do. I feel I responded somewhat to their perception of me as the leader by asking them how they perceived the structure of this meeting. Then throughout the meeting I tried to play the role of one who is trying to understand the contribution of each member. This included giving considerable attention to trying to understand what the contribution was of a visitor whom one of the delegates had brought to the meeting just to observe. His contributions tended to be given in not too clear a fashion. All in all, I felt the group had explored the interests of all present, had given some real understanding to each person's contribution as it was expressed, and had come forth with a suggested plan for the operation of the Workshop.

From this excerpt it is apparent that the leader sensed the group's dependency on him, and at first was tempted to play the role of leader. When he checked this tendency and concentrated on facilitating the understanding of others' contributions, the group seemed to make progress.

On the next day of the Workshop this same leader began to feel that the group had already reached a stage where he *was* free to make suggestions:

> With the convening of the morning group by [Delegate A] and with his temporary claim on the role of leader, I felt quite relieved that the leadership role was not in the hands of any one particular staff leader. As the meeting progressed toward attempting to work through some decision as to the schedule for the Workshop, and as various leadership functions were taken by various delegates at various moments, I felt pretty much as though the Workshop was getting well underway and that it would be possible for staff members to take a more active role . . . without constituting a threat to the self-responsibility of the other delegates. I felt as though I myself could take an active role and make suggestions and carry out some of the functions of a delegate, as well as being understanding and accepting of others. . . . I felt at ease putting forth sug-

> gestions to the group, for I felt they were willing to reject them or to accept them only on their merit.

One of the other staff leaders in his personal journal recorded a similar observation — that the group was beginning to perceive him as merely another member. Yet it is apparent from his notes that he is not completely certain that his perception is accurate. He sensed that in his subgroup (Home Group) his active participation might be inhibiting the other members:

> I am becoming more intimately involved in the total Workshop simply as a group member. Again I am very much surprised that this happened so fast, because my prediction would have been that I would have performed many more of the "leadership functions" during the early part of the Workshop. I think it is because I am perceiving that the others look at me as a group member rather than as one of the staff leaders. I hope I am not wrong in this perception. The biggest struggle for me has been in the Home Group where I have experienced conflict between a desire to enunciate principles and a desire to avoid differentiating myself from the group and restricting the participation of other members. One of the real learnings for me has been a renewed sensitivity to the lack of readiness of the group to receive statements of principle.

These recorded observations indicate that the group-centered leader begins to alter his initial role as he senses that the members no longer are reacting to him as *the* leader. As they become less dependent upon him, as they become more self-responsible, and as they achieve security to evaluate the worth of his suggestions, independent of his position — then the group-centered leader begins to feel free to change his role. Some of the cues which indicate to the leader that the group is ready to accept him as a member are suggested below:

> The members address him no more formally than others in the group.
> The group does not look to him to start the discussion.
> The members address their remarks to each other rather than to the leader alone.
> The members speak up without asking him for permission.

The members make decisions without depending upon him as the final judge.
Members feel free to disagree with him.
"Bright ideas" originate with many members of the group.
Members utilize each other as resource persons rather than the leader alone.
Members do not depend entirely on him to handle "problem members."

These are some of the many possible cues telling the leader that he is being perceived as merely another group member. Although no single one is a sure sign of the group's maturity, a number of them together would be fairly convincing evidence that the leader was losing his leadership position.

Out of the writer's experiences with groups, and particularly with the Workshop group, have come certain learnings having to do with the problem of the leader's own participation:

1. The more dependent the group is upon its leader, the more his contribution will inhibit the participation of other members.
2. The greater the status or prestige differential is between the leader and the members (as perceived by the members), the more likely the leader's contributions will inhibit participation of the members.
3. Once a leader becomes just "another member" of the group, any tendency for him to participate too frequently can be dealt with by the group much more easily than when he is perceived as *the* leader. People feel free to exert some control over the participation of *members*, whereas they are more afraid to try curbing the participation of the *leader*.
4. A leader's mere awareness of the potentially inhibiting effect of his participation on that of the members helps him control his participation. The awareness of the relationship probably makes him more sensitive to certain subtle signs that tell him he is inhibiting others.
5. The problem of finding the appropriate balance between listening to others and contributing one's own ideas in group discussion is a problem not only for the leader but also for each member. Consequently, even if a leader is successful in losing his leader-

ship role and thus acquiring membership, he still is faced with this problem.

6. Once the leader has lost his leadership position, his contributions are more likely to be accepted or rejected on their merits. As a formal leader, however, his contributions tend to be either accepted uncritically by the group or resisted simply out of the members' reaction to him as an authority figure. This is to say that in the early stages of a group's development, the leader's contributions will have a different effect on the group than they will in later stages — that is, after the group begins to react to the leader as another member rather than as a formal leader.

The data obtained from the project requiring the Workshop staff leaders to list daily each of the specific activities they volunteered to carry out have a bearing on this problem. During the first week five staff leaders recorded forty-nine specific activities which they voluntarily carried out in the total Workshop. During the second week the number dropped to twenty-eight, and in the third week to fourteen. The last figure cannot be considered accurate, inasmuch as two of the staff failed to turn in some of their reports during the third and final week. To correct for this, we computed the average number of activities performed by the staff leaders per day. These averages show a definite trend of decreasing activities from the first week through the third:

	No. of Activities	No. of Daily Reports Submitted	Average No. of Activities of Staff Each Day
First Week	49	25	9.5
Second Week	28	25	5.5
Third Week	14	17	4.1

These data show that the average number of voluntary activities performed by the five staff members decreased steadily from 9.5 the first week to 5.5 the second week, and finally to only 4.1 the third. The reports turned in by the staff included only rather gross and general activities (such as "Took part in planning of the schedule," "Volunteered to take a part in role-playing," "Gave formal presentation to Home Group"), and did not include the more subtle and specific functions they performed during group discussions (such as presenting ideas, clarifying members' contributions, making a suggestion that the group adopted). Consequently, we cannot generalize from the above data and conclude that the *total functioning* of the staff decreased. Our data allow us to say only that one type of staff activity decreased — volunteer activities that were very gross and clearly defined.

WHEN THE LEADER ACQUIRES MEMBERSHIP

It may be unfortunate that we have thus far described the process by which the leader's role changes as a "process of the leader's losing his leadership." This is a rather negative way of phrasing the process and suggests that the leader is giving up something of importance or that the total group is losing something. A more positive and accurate statement would be that the leader *acquires membership* in the group. Viewed this way, the leader actually gains something, and the group, too, acquires another productive member.

Previously we advanced the thesis that the formal leader, because of the tendency of members to perceive him as an authority figure, is in a position whereby his contributions are likely either to be met with resistance and reaction or to be passively and uncritically accepted by submissive group members. It was pointed out that in either event the group would lose in total effectiveness. If, however, the leader is able to acquire membership in the group, in the psychological sense of being perceived as simply another potential contributor, the group is free to accept or reject his contributions on their own merit.

The Workshop experience illustrated this phenomenon. Data from the staff journals give evidence that, from their frame of reference, the staff members felt that they eventually acquired membership roles in the group. One of the staff recorded the following thoughts in his personal journal of the third day of the Workshop:

> Today I felt (in the Home Group) that we had gone beyond that position and that I could be much freer and play many more roles and be myself — contributing ideas, etc. It seemed to me today that I could express myself without inflicting my particular position on the group because I happened to be one of the staff members. Rather the group seemed to give and take, accepting ideas on their

> respective merits — that is, the merits of the ideas, not on the status or position of the speaker.

At the end of the first week this same staff member made another entry in his journal about his changing role:

> After one week of the Workshop I suddenly realize today that I feel less like a staff member or a designated leader in this group than in any other group where I was one of the staff. That is to say, I feel like a regular group member, participating on the same level as everyone else. We [the staff] have never been differentiated by our place of sitting, and this it seems to me has brought a common group feeling in which delegates and staff are working more as one than in any other previous experience in which I was either staff or group member.

During the second week, however, this leader felt differently, and he began to wonder if the staff had really lost its leadership position in the *total Workshop meetings:*

> I find myself, after not speaking for some time, anxious to be a good group member and to perform various leadership functions, and yet I am embarrassed that the staff leaders have been doing too much talking. Therefore, I withhold or am frustrated in trying to see how we fit in and can allow the total group to take over these functions. Thus I suspect that, in the eyes of the group, the staff are still the perceived leaders of our *total group meetings*, or possibly one or two or three of the staff at various times are so perceived more than the others.

Several days later, however, the total group gave evidence that the staff leaders had really gained membership, for the members began to question whether or not they wanted to listen to further formal presentations from the staff. The fact that the members were free to listen for one session, then question whether to hear a similar presentation during the second session, attests to the group's freedom to treat the staff as they would other members. On this occasion the staff leader quoted previously recorded in his journal:

> I was surprised today, and happily so, that some members of the group felt they could challenge our previous decision to have further

> staff presentations. Some even felt that the group itself could have evolved these ideas (contained in the staff's presentations) without this formal kind of presentation. Some of the members at least seem to have really felt a terrific potential in the total group's being able to work on a problem. They feel now that the group can proceed to fulfill its needs.

Another staff member made observations about his role in the group, at the end of the first week:

> I am becoming much more intimately involved in the total Workshop simply as a group member. Again, I am very much surprised that this happened so fast, because my prediction was that I would perform many more of the "leadership functions" during the early part of the Workshop. I think it is because I am perceiving that others look at me as a group member rather than as one of the staff leaders.

A later entry in this same leader's journal reads:

> Of interest to me was the thing that happened in the special interest group I joined. The group is using me as a resource person, calling on me to present facts, yet I have not noticed a dependency on me. There is a lot of participation on the part of all group members. At one time one of the members felt free enough to challenge a statement I made. As a matter of fact, this was done by two members. These are very good signs, as far as I'm concerned, that I'm losing my leadership position.

Still later he wrote:

> Today in the Home Group I practically had no functional role. I was called out during the early part of the session, and had no part in making the decision as to how the group would proceed. . . . This was a very gratifying experience because it made me feel that the group did not depend on me, despite the fact that I had made my theoretical position quite clear the night before in the total Workshop session. The only fly in the ointment was the comment of one of the delegates about how much he respected my psychological training. On the other side of the coin was Joe's

remark that he was growing to realize how much the staff did not know.

An additional excerpt from the staff journals should be included, because it describes in some detail what one of the staff thought was happening to the leaders during the first week:

> I feel that [Leader A] and [Leader B] have both been perceived as leaders of the group in varying ways and at varying times during the first five days. I see the rest of the staff leaders as being perceived probably as semi-leaders and semi-members, almost from the first day on. I think that as the end of the first week has come, it is fair to say that because of the type of role [Leaders A and B] have tried to play, they have been divested of their leadership roles and they, too, have become semi-leaders and semi-members. I feel that although at times we are called upon for varying things by the group — particularly in special interest groups — the Workshop now feels it has responsibility for whatever it does whether in the large group or small groups. I feel that any one of us could take as active and aggressive a role as we may want at this point, and, because the group has sensed that it is responsible for itself to such a degree, it would be able to handle such aggressiveness on the part of any one of us.

THE DIFFICULTY OF BEING AN EFFECTIVE MEMBER

The staff's personal journals provided an interesting and unexpected idea about the role of the leader. This idea is an important one and deserves a central place in our theories about leadership. Stated in the simplest way:

> It is often more difficult to be an effective member of a group when one is *perceived as a group member* than when one is *perceived as a group leader.*

When a person is perceived as a *leader,* certain factors make it easier for him to make constructive contributions to the group. First, the members *expect* him to contribute — he need not win the *right* to contribute. A person occupying the formal role of leader is given a permanent invitation, by virtue of the cultural expectations about the leader role, to try his hand at directing the group's activities by contributing ideas, suggestions, and directions. Quite a different expectation exists about the role of the group member. He is supposed to follow the leader, to hold back his contributions until the leader has had his chance. His contributions are not welcomed by the group. In fact, his attempts to make contributions are often perceived as a desire to compete with the leader for the leadership of the group. Second, the contributions of the formal leader are usually expected to be better than those of a group member — otherwise, as members often say, why would the leader be in the position of leadership. Third, it seems that the role of the leader in our culture is much more prescribed and well-defined than the role of the member. There are rules, procedures, and required attitudes for the role of the leader. Thus the leader does not have to depend entirely upon spontaneous and unrehearsed behavior. He is supposed to be patient, fair, neutral, understanding, tolerant; and if he has had previous experience as a leader, he has learned some of the appropriate responses for implementing these attitudes. In addition, the leader can be somewhat removed — psychologically separated — from the group. Thus we would expect that it might be easier for him to be understanding of different points of view and accepting of others in the group.

During the period in which the group-centered leader is losing his position as perceived leader and is beginning to be perceived as just another group member, he apparently experiences some difficulty learning how to be an effective member without benefit of the permissions, expectations, and protections of his previous formal role. One way of describing this is to say that the group-centered leader discovers that when he becomes perceived as a group member he must rely more upon what he is as a *person*, for he cannot fall back on the *role*. One of the Workshop leaders expressed this feeling in one of his early personal journals:

> I think I have come to the realization that it is much easier to fulfill some of the "leadership functions" (understanding and clarifying feelings, linking responses, etc.) when you are perceived as the leader than when you are perceived as a group member. What this means to me is that, when you are perceived as a group member and are operating as such, you are much more a person than when you are perceived as a leader. Being a group member, then, makes a demand on you to be accepting and understanding of other people

> even when you are terribly ego-involved in the group discussion. Apparently, being an understanding group member is much more difficult for me than being an understanding group leader.

Other staff leaders apparently experienced this problem at various stages of the Workshop. One of the staff leaders frequently mentioned that he was in conflict in some of the group meetings — on the one hand wanting to step in and actively demonstrate understanding of another member or help someone clarify his feelings, yet feeling reluctant to do this because he was not at the time perceived by the group as *the* leader. Had he been the sole perceived leader, he would have felt freer to carry out these important functions.

Earlier in the chapter we saw how this problem also emerged in connection with group members' learning to become productive contributors. Although the members frequently wanted to make creative suggestions, they often felt they could not do so because they felt they were not perceived as the group's leader.

CHANGES IN THE QUALITY OF GROUP-MEMBER INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION

One of the aims of the group-centered leader is to create in the group a psychological climate of acceptance, understanding, and safety. When the leader has been successful in accomplishing this aim, and members begin to feel and experience this unique group climate, they demonstrate remarkable changes in their participation and in their verbal interactions with other members. Communication becomes facilitated as they learn to express their feelings and opinions openly and more clearly, and as they learn to listen in order to understand what others are trying to communicate. Members begin to feel accepted in the group, they drop their defensiveness, and they begin to experience significant changes in their attitudes toward other members.

Growing Perception of the Climate

Some members apparently become aware quite early that they are experiencing an entirely different kind of climate under group-centered leadership. Others feel the impact of the climate only after many sessions. Undoubtedly this difference is due in part to the fact that group members differ with respect to the intensity of their feelings of insecurity, their fear of evaluation, and their lack of confidence. One member of the Workshop in his very first interview made the following observations about the climate in the group:

> *P:* I think it's a matter of feeling that you're part of a group that will not depose you as a member of the group, if you've taken a stand that's wrong. I think there's a greater degree of honesty here.
>
> *Interviewer:* You're not so worried in this group that you will be laughed at or pushed out of the group if you take a position and let it go.
>
> *P:* Yeah, I feel that.
>
> *Interviewer:* There's a real feeling of trust or even a climate that has been established which makes you feel different than you do in other groups.
>
> *P:* I think this is very true. I find this particularly refreshing after the climate at the University here. Now I don't know in what ways this is different from any other large university — I'm not acquainted with other universities — but the thing that I've observed at this one is that it's almost a disgrace to admit you don't know something. . . .

Another delegate on the second day felt a real difference between the Workshop and another training group he had been in the previous year:

> Here people seem to say, "Well now, before you decide to do this let's see what this will do to people's feelings," and they begin to interpret and recreate what it will do and you see almost instantly that some people would have resisted the idea.

Still another delegate felt the impact of the climate quite early, yet his reaction was somewhat ambivalent. He writes in his journal of the second day:

> In the special interest group where I least expected to find the deepest experience of sharing . . . I felt a real emotional reaction. . . . As I tried to see why this sudden and strong emotion (to the point

> of near tears) came at this point, I could see two factors. The discussion was on the prevailing theological positions and the people in the group were so well informed and so clear in their own thinking that my own struggles in this area . . . swept over me with depressing seriousness. In addition, the fact that my own confusion was apparent enough to have the group turn its attention to me directly and ask how I felt about the continuation of the group so moved me that I was all the more self-conscious. . . . My immediate reaction was an ambivalent one — to stay in the group and face my own sense of inadequacy maturely or to drop out and escape the continued sense of not being able to contribute.

Though this delegate is still feeling insecure, the fact that the group would show a real concern for his opinion moved him almost to tears.

One of the delegates perceived the climate of the Workshop as one of *forgiveness:*

> Well, for example, I think I've experienced more in just a few days here than I have in most churches I've been associated with. Because I have the feeling that we tried to cover some things this morning that were basic, and I'm sure one of them is honesty. But before you can have honesty you have to feel that forgiveness underlies the whole group. I mean that there is a kind of acceptance of you, the person. Though they may disagree with what you're saying, they're not going to exclude you from the group.

Another delegate expresses his growing perception of the group climate in terms of an increasing *trust* of the group:

> I might evaluate my feelings at this point and say maybe I have been a little reluctant to express myself in this particular group because some of my most sensitive feelings were too sacred to be trampled on, so I have intentionally guarded them. Yet I have been honest with the group, too. Perhaps I can trust the group more than I could before.

The fact that these delegates spontaneously expressed such feelings about the group climate is evidence that the Workshop leaders achieved a measure of success in their efforts to create an accepting, nonevaluative, and safe climate. Delegates soon began to feel that they could be themselves — they could express intimate feelings, they could be honest, and they could even make mistakes.

CHANGES IN MEMBERS' RESPONSES TO OTHERS

In a group climate in which members feel an absence of threat they begin to perceive others differently. This perception, in turn, produces a change in the way they respond to others.

Reacting to People as Stereotypes. At first the members reacted to others as types or stereotypes rather than as persons, each with an individuality of his own. Somehow this way of reacting to others was supplanted by a growing respect for others — others were seen as persons having their own feelings, needs, and unique characteristics. This changing perception of others was expressed by a delegate in one of his interviews:

> As I mentioned before I was very suspicious of people in religious work, and I had a stereotyped conception of people in religious work, but meeting a lot of them, talking to them, experiencing with them these things in the Workshop, well — I don't know if these people are extreme types or unique specimens of the people who work in religious activities, but they do have a sincerity and respect for each other that I like. And I think I respect them now whereas I don't think I did formerly.

Another delegate, himself a leader in religious education, gave an amazingly frank description of the change that was taking place in his stereotyped attitudes toward others:

> *P:* Here are a group of people from different parts of the country and different denominations — even different religions. And, I don't know, some may be . . . some may consider themselves outside of all religion, formally anyway. And yet we can sit down and these differences — these kinds of categories — have disappeared almost entirely in my thinking; and this is a thing that's going on more and more every day.
>
> *Interviewer:* People seem to have lost all their status — there's a basic similarity now about. . . .
>
> *P:* I don't . . . not their status, I guess their ascribed status, the

> status that people have ascribed to them in defense of being of one race or another, or being . . . here's a Presbyterian and here's an Anglican and here's a Universalist. It's very interesting because the first day I was very conscious of these things. I think we all have certain kinds of prejudices but different expectations, from different kinds of people, they behave in certain ways. For example, I think I had a stereotype about the Anglican. Frankly, I don't know what I expected him to do, but I expected him to defend very hotly and very strongly anything which in any way seemed to attack his position. I guess I expect this of anyone, everyone. I haven't been able to observe any of this sort of thing going on. In fact, the person who made the strongest statement that they were willing to trust this process as opposed to an authoritarian kind of procedure was an Anglican. Now I don't, as I say, I don't understand exactly an Anglican's position, but I've always felt that it's rather authoritarian. And I think it is, structurally. And it's kind of interesting, I think it's true I'm totally unconscious of the person who's a Negro in our group. I mean, I was very happy to see a person of another race in our group, I really was. I felt this would add something to it. But even making this kind of recognition is noticing a difference, I mean. And all these things are . . . I don't think it's a matter of degree but it seems to grow on me increasingly. I think if people really try to understand each other and know each other as persons that some of these ascribed differences and so forth would diminish.

Here is a person who is becoming aware of a fundamental change in the way he looks at others. Whereas in the first few days of the Workshop he saw people as stereotypes, at the end of only one week he is beginning to respect them more as separate persons.

There was some indication that the members of the Workshop reacted toward the leaders as stereotypes rather than as separate persons. Thus, one delegate remarked in one of his interviews:

> . . . My immediate reaction to [Leader C] when I saw his name on the brochure was, "Jeezil Peezil, look at the Workshop having a Y.M.C.A. person." I find it hard to have much respect for the typical Y worker guy. And yet, seeing him operate, seeing him in relationships with other people, he's the type of person you say it's good to be around.

Awareness of the Need to Change Others. Another aspect of the members' early attitudes toward others was the need of some members to change others or, as one delegate expressed it, to convert others:

> *S:* I think that in my experience there are still comparatively few who have had any rootage in this Church of which I feel I am a member. This is the part that sounds bigoted, but I don't know how to express it in any other terms.
>
> *Interviewer:* You mean to say there are few in this Workshop?
>
> *S:* Yeah, few in this Workshop, and that's not saying that I'm any better. . . . Yet I feel that I still have the responsibility to preach the Gospel, to show the goodness of this historic community to such persons. . . .

It is improbable that this delegate was able to accept and understand others, as they were, feeling as he did such a strong need to make them more like himself. Yet the fact that he is becoming aware of this feeling within himself is evidence of a process of change that is beginning to take place in his orientation toward others.

Learning to Listen and to Understand Others. Following or accompanying the members' increased respect for each other as persons is an increased willingness to listen to them, and to try to understand the real meaning of their verbal contributions. Apparently real two-way communication cannot occur until one has enough respect for others to listen to what they have to say. Hence the climate set by the group-centered leader becomes a prerequisite for effective two-way communication in a group. One delegate expressed clearly his earlier tendency to fail to understand others and the change he was experiencing at the Workshop:

> *A:* When I made suggestions earlier in the Workshop it seemed that I wasn't understanding what the group was getting at or what individuals were getting at. I listened to what they said but I reacted either to some term they used or the total position they took, but then reacted — I don't want to say in a defensive way — but I didn't have the feeling of acceptance — I don't even know if it was a hostile reaction. But I didn't accept it and try to understand what this person was saying. I made a countersuggestion which was apparently rejected.

> *Interviewer:* It strikes you that the reason your statements were rejected was because you hadn't understood the other person.
>
> *A:* Yes, and perhaps because they weren't trying to understand me. I think that's important, too. I think that's beginning to happen now. I feel that I'm getting into a position where, instead of reacting as a sort of stimulus-response affair, I accept what the person says, and make an interpretation of it and *then* react to that interpretation.

This delegate is learning how to listen with understanding, and it is interesting to note too that he has independently arrived at the notion of checking his understanding of the other person by means of reflecting the person's point of view before reacting to it. In a later interview the same delegate comments again on his increasing tendency to understand others:

> I think I mentioned before that this was one thing which I got out of being in the Workshop. I used to say that I tried to understand what the other person was saying, before I got into the Workshop. But I realize now that it was just words. I didn't know how to go about doing it.

Probably the most explicit and convincing description of the kind of understanding of others which delegates learned at the Workshop is contained in the following excerpt from an interview:

> At least it works better, as far as I can see, than a particular religious faith as being the groundwork of unity, in the sense that I have never seen a group of people who consider themselves religious, nonreligious, or of different religions and all conglomerations of different denominations understand each other as well as we have here. I don't think anyone in the group is ready to go to war with any other faction.

The act of listening with understanding and acceptance to another has a potent effect upon the speaker's attitudes toward the listener. This is one of the truly significant facts emerging from researches in human relations, for it means that a person's hostile and defensive attitudes can be reduced simply by demonstrating a sincere intent to understand him and to accept his right to his individual attitudes or opinions. The interviews provided an excellent opportunity to observe this effect, for one of the delegates talked about how this happened to him. This was the same delegate from whose interviews we previously extracted the statements about wanting to convert all the non-Christians in the Workshop:

> *S:* . . . I articulated once during the Workshop to Manny that I just didn't like him. I find now that although I don't go for him like a ton of bricks I have been able to accept him as a member of the Workshop. But I think maybe that's because of my re-understanding of what the Workshop was — that is, it is a collection of random individuals not necessarily Christians.
>
> *Interviewer:* You had reacted against him but through straightening out your understanding of who actually is here you have been able more or less to re-admit him, is that it?
>
> *S:* . . . He is — let's see, you know — black hair and smokes a pipe — oh what's his name — oh, yes, Tim. Tim's very precise understanding of what I said in the session last night about my learnings here was almost overpowering in breaking down any negative attitudes I have toward him. . . . I mean it really made it impossible for me to be hostile.
>
> *Interviewer:* This thorough demonstration to you that he had understood what you had been saying, and perhaps because he was the first to do this that evening, took away any grounds for disliking him.
>
> *S:* Uh-huh, uh-huh. . . .

Decrease in Need to Defend One's Ideas. One of the barriers to effective communication is a person's need to defend his own position so strongly that he prevents others from stating their points of view. This happens frequently in groups, the result being that no one listens to anyone else because each is so busy defending his own point of view. Furthermore, there is little chance that any member will change his point of view, because he never allows himself to hear another idea. The group-centered leader, by demonstrating his own desire to listen to others, creates a climate in which the need to defend one's ideas is not so strong. One delegate discusses this in his interviews:

> *A:* I've been conscious of myself doing this before the Workshop, but I don't think I understood it as well as I do now — that is,

when you once take a position, I mean on a particular issue, it's very difficult to get out of it then. You've got to defend it then — I think even past the point where — I think your personal integrity is at stake here. I've noticed this going on. In other words, once you've taken a stand, you're very loath to let go of it. You're obligated to defend that thing.

Interviewer: Not so much to others, but it's a feeling that you're right and you have yourself out on this limb and you want to be true to yourself.

A: Yeah, I think that's right. I know in personal conversations, bull sessions, I've often been put in that kind of position, actually overstate myself. I say things that I simply don't believe and I've been more conscious of this. Although I think this thing is really lessened in the Workshop because these people are really trying to be conscious in their participation, and it's not quite so obvious.

Another kind of defensiveness, in this case an insistence upon using one's special terms in communicating with others, is illustrated in the interview record of another delegate. It is clear how this kind of defensiveness acts as a barrier to effective communication in a group:

T: The last time I was here I mentioned that a lot of words being used by the group were very unclear to me. I didn't know what kind of definitions they were applying to them. Well, I discovered today that I was using words for which I had special definitions for myself, and no one seemed able to know what I was talking about. . . . I was talking past them, and it seemed that my stubbornness in insisting on using these terms this way got certain reactions that I didn't particularly like. I felt I wasn't being accepted . . . that they were rejecting me . . . not quite throwing me out but feeling he paid his money and that's the only reason we'll let him stick around.

Interviewer: You had been feeling you were on the fringe of the group, that you were here just because they were forced to let you stay. But now you see it as a problem within yourself and not within these other people.

Both this and the preceding excerpt illustrate the process by which group members become less defensive in an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance. Once they begin to feel that others are not going to attack their ideas or eject them from the group (physically or psychologically), people apparently sense that there is nothing to defend one's self or ideas *against*. So, instead of defending themselves against attack through fortifying their various positions, group members drop their defenses, and, like the delegate whose comments are quoted above, they may actually begin to analyze and attack their *own* positions. When self-analysis and self-questioning replace defensiveness, effective communication between members of a group becomes possible. Two-way communication does not usually occur unless people stop defending their points of view long enough to understand the views of others.

SOME CHANGES IN METHODS OF DECISION-MAKING

As might be expected, if a group finds itself with a leader who feels he need not make the decisions for the entire group, the members themselves may begin to assume responsibility for facilitating decision-making. Being unaccustomed to this responsibility, the members usually experience considerable impatience with their early efforts, yet through trial and error may later develop effective procedures for arriving at group decisions. Not all groups will react alike to this new responsibility, but there seem to be certain characteristic stages which most groups go through in acquiring decision-making skill.

EARLY IMPATIENCE AND PUSHING FOR DECISIONS

When first confronted with the realization that they cannot depend upon the leader to make decisions for the group, the members react in a variety of ways. Some withdraw into a stunned silence, unable to contribute anything to the group's problem. Others persistently cling to the hope that the leader will eventually pull the group out of the throes of indecision, and often they will try to persuade him to exercise his power to this end. Other members, while appreciating the desirability of having the group make its own decisions, nevertheless secretly hope that the leader will make some suggestion which, by virtue of the leader's status, will seem more attractive than any of the other possibilities facing the group. Then there is the group member who can offer nothing more constructive than repeated and frantic appeals, such as "Let's decide on something," or "We're wasting time, let's hurry and decide."

The Workshop provided examples of some of these reactions. One delegate expressed himself in this way:

> *F:* At this juncture I'd just much rather sit than talk. . . . I have a very mixed reaction, not at all pleased with my reaction [to the meeting]. I got to the point where I was willing to say "yes" to anything.
>
> *Interviewer:* Just anything to end the confusion and frustration.
>
> *F:* Yeah, except that doesn't end the confusion and frustration — just intensifies it. . . .

Another delegate expresses his discomfort about the absence of "a leader":

> I just think that it's pointless to have a group without a leader. That just bothers the life out of me. It has ever since I started this [Workshop]. . . . Otherwise who is going to formulate this thing well enough so that we can come to any conclusions, or so that we don't repeat ourselves — which we did this afternoon? We started repeating and repeating and trying to clarify — well, I just don't like it.

A third delegate feels a need for "an authority" to help speed up the decision-making process:

> I sympathize with those who said they felt the pressure of time, because I did too. And I wanted to say, "Let's move ahead, let's get some of this stuff out of the way." And at the same time I didn't like to do that because I had the feeling that people weren't getting to express themselves. Now I guess what I'm saying is that I think the system is inadequate. I have a feeling that if we had delegated an authority to decide about some of those matters and to present two or three alternatives which we can decide on rather quickly, that people then wouldn't have the feeling of being — maybe they would — but I don't think they'd have the same feeling of frustration they had this morning.

INCREASING TOLERANCE OF THE GROUP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

The initial period of impatience is characteristically followed by an increase in group members' tolerance of the group decision-making process. Often there is a recognition that group decision-making is a complex and time-consuming process, yet a growing acceptance of the necessity for taking the time to consider each member's point of view. In the words of one of the Workshop delegates:

> . . . I like particularly the way the group gets to the point where some sort of decision will be made and then one member will make a countersuggestion, and this is taken up — although not everybody's countersuggestions are taken up . . . I feel this is sort of a democratic group. By this I mean there's some sort of opportunity for participation by everybody. If the group gets to the point where a decision is going to be made and some member feels this is not the decision that ought to be made or that not enough discussion has taken place, then, when he makes this move, usually the group questions him further in an attempt to understand what he is driving at. And then perhaps new ideas come out, and they kinda shift — the group seems to shift their original points. In other words, they tend to arrive at a different kind of decision as a result of this.

Another delegate recorded the following thoughts in his personal journal:

> The Workshop is becoming more tolerant of the time involved in making group decisions — more aware that it is necessary to allow all who wish to express themselves to do so — and at the same time the group is becoming more skilled at making decisions in less time. The morning session of the total group today made decisions on four matters and did it within the time and with a minimum of friction. . . . The group has developed a sensitivity to each person to the point that when two members specifically stated that they thought the group was moving toward a worship service which they could not conscientiously approve or could not share personally, the group could not move to a decision which was pretty clearly a majority point of view.

Observations such as these attest to a growing acceptance of the desirability for a group to be sensitive to different points of view and to delay making decisions until these points of view can be expressed. We can do no more than speculate as to why group members become more tolerant of group decision-making. Perhaps they begin to sense that *better* decisions evolve when all points of view are considered, or there may be an awareness that decisions arrived at through maximum participation are later more likely to be *carried out*. Another hypothesis is that group members begin to feel it is more important to respect the feelings of others than to reach immediate decisions — that is, the making of an actual decision becomes valued less than respect for others.

VARIETY OF DECISION–MAKING METHODS UTILIZED

One of the most interesting aspects of the development of a self-directing group is its learning to utilize a number of different decision-making procedures. A great deal of trial-and-error experimentation goes on in a group while it is learning how to solve its problems and responsibly accomplish its objectives. The Workshop provided examples of the use of voting, consensus, postponement, and delegation of the decision-making authority to subgroups and individuals. Each of these procedures requires brief explanation.

Voting. Because in our society voting is probably the procedure most commonly used by groups for making decisions, it is only natural that a group learning to make its own decisions will turn first to voting. Group members soon discover, however, how dependent they have been on a formal leader for administering this method of decision-making. In a situation where a leader is trying to carry out a group-centered role, as in the Workshop, the group's attempts to use voting creates certain unique problems:

1. When the members cannot depend upon a formal leader to decide when to call for a vote, there is usually considerable disagreement within the group about the timing of a vote.
2. When there is no formal leader, the members of the group feel they have no right to call for a vote, so no one does.
3. Often when some member does call for a vote, the group simply does not respond to his suggestion. A vote is called for; but nobody, or perhaps only a fraction of the group, votes.
4. Often after the group has voted, it ignores the outcome and continues the discussion.

5. Occasionally a single dissenting vote will so distress the group that it postpones acting on a vote until after sounding out the dissenter about his reasons for dissenting. The group may even wish to be reassured that the dissenter feels all right about being defeated.

These were some of the problems that arose in the Workshop in connection with its attempts to make decisions by voting. As a result, the group seemed to lose confidence in this method. Only on rare occasions was voting used, beyond the first few days of the Workshop. On those occasions when voting was employed, the issues were such as to involve little controversy and only a slight amount of concern for the members. On important and controversial issues it appeared as if the group did not dare vote. The group occasionally used voting as a preliminary indicator of how the members felt about a particular issue; it was as if a straw vote of this kind gave the group a preliminary clue to the amount of discussion that would be required to arrive at a consensus.

Although we cannot confidently generalize from the experience of the Workshop group alone, it would appear that self-directing groups may not find voting a very reliable method of arriving at decisions, except on matters of little concern to the members. For more important matters requiring a group decision, voting is not a very useful procedure. It may prematurely crystallize opinion and thus create a disturbing split in the group; it may inhibit discussion; and it seldom results in a decision that is binding on the group. More research is needed to determine for what kinds of groups and under what conditions voting can be useful as a method of helping groups reach decisions.

Consensus. By far the most frequent method used by the Workshop group for making decisions was consensus. A typical situation would find the group trying to decide how it should schedule its program for the next day. Suggestions would be made by a few members and would be evaluated by others; discussion would ensue until someone sensed that the total group was reaching agreement; someone might remark that he thought the group was almost agreed; another member might ask if there were any further suggestions or any remaining objections to the suggestion upon which most members agreed; a period of silence would occur, after which someone would move on to another problem or perhaps remark that the group apparently was definitely decided. Thus, in a very informal and flexible manner, the group would sensitively "feel out itself" with regard to its readiness for a decision. In a very real sense, the group, not a leader, kept control over the decision-making process.

Postponing Decisions. The Workshop illustrated how a group can agree to disagree by postponing the making of *any* decision on some problem which is very important and controversial. Allowed to work out its own decision-making procedures, a group can demonstrate amazing sensitivity to the feelings of its members. By postponing a decision, a group seems to be protecting some of its members (even when the members represent a small minority) against the will of the majority, when somehow it senses that a decision might require some of its members to violate their deepest values or might irreparably split up the total group.

In the Workshop one important issue — namely, whether there would be some formal worship period for the total group — remained unresolved. Part of the group wanted a formal worship period for *themselves*, yet they soon discovered they were trying to push everyone to share such an experience. Another part of the group strongly resisted the idea of an institutionalized worship period. The matter came up for lengthy discussion several times during the course of the Workshop, yet no decision was ever made, unless it could be said that the group implicitly decided *not* to make a decision. The group seemed to sense that a decision to have a formal worship period might embarrass some of the members, yet a decision against a worship period would somehow be perceived as a prohibition or even a denial of the rights of those few who felt the need for it.

Interestingly enough, although there was no decision on the worship problem, the total group one day spontaneously responded to a member's suggestion for a period of silence at the beginning of a discussion session. This action seemed to serve the function of allowing members to worship in silence without forcing everyone to participate openly in a public worship service. It was an interesting group resolution of a problem that seemed too controversial for a formal decision.

Delegation of Decision-Making Authority. Democratic or self-directing groups have often been attacked on the basis that it is inefficient for a group to require that all decisions be decided by the total group. This argument holds that the leader or some other individual can sometimes make better or quicker decisions than a group. The assumption underlying this criticism of self-directing groups is that such groups *always* require that their decisions be total group decisions. This assumption does not seem to be a valid one, for self-directing groups often choose to delegate the decision-making responsibility for some decisions to individual members or subgroups.

This occurred upon occasion in the Workshop. The total group delegated decision-making both to committees and to individuals. Upon analysis it seemed that the group did this when (*a*) it felt that time would be saved, (*b*) it felt that a certain few individuals would have most of the facts required for a decision, or (*c*) it trusted the individuals or subgroups enough to know that their decisions would not be harmful to the total group. A reasonable interpretation of the Workshop's behavior in delegating the making of decisions is that the group was so sensitive to the demands of its total situation that it could utilize a variety of decision-making methods. There was no rigid adherence to any single method. Rather, that method which seemed appropriate for a particular decision was the one adopted. If an important problem faced the group, one that it was felt could be trusted only to the total group, then the group retained the decision-making authority. On the other hand, if the group felt pressed for time, it often was willing to adopt the quicker method of delegating authority to individuals. In these instances, as in many others, the group demonstrated a remarkable sensitivity to its own needs and to the demands of the total situation. Once again the Workshop group demonstrated a capacity for self-responsible and appropriate behavior.

Some Outcomes of an Experience in a Self-Directing Group

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If, as our theory implies, group-centered leadership releases the constructive and creative potential of group members, we would expect that an experience in a self-directing group would produce certain changes in the members, which would endure beyond the period of the group's life. In the previous chapter we saw both the group and the individual members in the process of change; in this chapter we shall examine the nature of these changes as they were revealed by the delegates immediately after the Workshop and some six months following the end of the experience. Here the focus will be upon the outcomes of the Workshop, in an attempt to determine whether the experience produced lasting changes in the members.

A significant part of the research plan for the Workshop was to try to find out what happened to the delegates after the actual training experience. Did they become different in any way — as leaders or as members of subsequent groups? How did they perceive the Workshop in retrospect — did the initial impact wear off or did they continue to feel it in later experiences? Did their behavior change after the Workshop, or did they simply demonstrate different behavior only while they were actually in this unique situation? The staff relied upon two principal sources of data to provide answers to these questions: (*a*) the Follow-up Questionnaire and (*b*) the Q-sort administrations. Both of these were described in Chapter 6.

The outcomes of the Workshop as revealed by the data from the questionnaire and the Q-sorts will be described in this chapter under three different headings: (*a*) the personal growth of the delegates; (*b*) changes in the delegates' post-Workshop behavior; and (*c*) changes in the delegates' conceptions of leadership and membership.

THE PERSONAL GROWTH OF THE DELEGATES

In an earlier study (34) in which the writer conducted follow-up interviews with delegates who had been in a self-directing training group, most of the delegates reported that the group experience had produced positive changes in their personalities and in their self-concepts. These changes, as they appeared to the writer, were not unlike those that occur in clients who have undergone successful psychotherapy.[1] Consequently, as part of the present Workshop experiment an effort was made to determine whether similar changes had occurred as a result of the members' experience in this self-directing group. Evidence of the effect of the Workshop on the delegates' personal growth was obtained from the Follow-up Questionnaire returned by fifteen of the twenty-six delegates — specifically from the answers to two questions:

1. Looking back on the total Workshop experience, what, if anything, did it really mean to you in terms of your own growth as an individual or as a professionsl person?
2. What aspect of the Workshop (if any) was most rewarding to you?

---

[1] Delegates reported that they felt more secure, less fearful of people, less defensive, less withdrawn, more responsible, more confident, and more spontaneous; some revealed that they developed new incentives, that they felt as though they had been "saved" as in a religious conversion; still others felt upset and in a state of radical change.

Answers to the second question were included in this analysis because some of the members made references to their personal growth as they analyzed which aspect of the Workshop was most rewarding to them.

All references to self in the answers to these two questions were first identified and then classified as to whether they indicated a "Positive Effect" of the Workshop or a "Negative Effect." The results of this analysis are summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Number of Self-reference Statements Indicating Positive and Negative Effect of Workshop

	Number of Persons *	*Number of Statements*
Positive Effect	15	52
Negative Effect	3	4

* Out of the 15 who returned Questionnaire

From Table 3 it can be seen that all of the delegates who returned the Questionnaire made references to self indicating a positive effect of the Workshop. Only three of the fifteen made statements indicating a negative effect, but all three of these delegates made positive-effect statements also.

Further analysis showed that it was not just a small percentage of the delegates who contributed most of the positive self-reference statements, as can be seen from Table 4.

POSITIVE EFFECT ON DELEGATES' GROWTH

The various statements indicating a positive effect of the Workshop were classified into eight different categories. These are shown in Table 5, along with the number of statements falling into each and the number of delegates who made statements in each category. It can be seen from Table 5 that two-thirds (ten) of all of the delegates who returned a questionnaire made statements (sixteen in all) indicating that the Workshop had given them intellectual growth and stimulation;

Table 4

Distribution of Positive-effect
Statements Obtained from 15 Delegates

Number of Positive-Effect Statements		*Number of Delegates*
7		1
6		2
5		2
4		1
3		4
2		2
1		3
0		0
	Total	15

eight reported that they had acquired more self-understanding of their behavior in the roles of leader and/or member in groups; and so on.

Although these data are subject to the usual limitations ascribed to self-evaluations, they provide one type of evidence of the personal and subjective meaning of the Workshop as felt by the delegates approximately six months after the experience. If one accepts the proposition that changes in *behavior* are frequently a function of changes in the way people perceive themselves and others, then it would follow that these data provide an encouraging indication that the Workshop facilitated self-development and released constructive forces within the delegates.

Of particular relevance to our theory of group-centered leadership are those reported changes in the delegates' attitudes toward themselves, others, and relationships between self and others. These data strongly suggest that the group-centered leader's efforts at conveying acceptance of and respect for others and demonstrating a willingness to understand others are rewarded by the members' becoming more accepting and understanding of themselves and of each other. Thus these data confirm the earlier studies by Sheerer (86), Stock (90), and Pearl (66), all of which showed that individuals demonstrate greater acceptance of and respect for others following an experience in which they themselves have been accepted and respected by their therapist.

Table 5

Classification of Self-reference Statements Indicating Positive Effects of Workshop

Categories of Self-reference Statements	*Number of Statements*	*Number of Persons Making Statement (Total N = 15)*
Experienced intellectual maturity and growth; acquired new concepts and ideas; concretized previously vague ideas; acquired broader base of experience.	16	10
Acquired greater understanding of self in roles of leader and/or member; greater understanding of self in relation to group.	8	6
Acquired greater acceptance of and respect for worth of others, their differing opinions, and the value of listening to them.	7	4
Became more confident, adequate, relaxed, and free to communicate.	5	5
Became more aware of own faults, limitations, personal needs and motives (hostility, dependence, ego-needs).	5	4
Became less desirous of changing, manipulating and directing others.	4	3
Acquired more understanding of self in relationships with others; felt better able to relate well with others — less defensive.	4	3
Acquired greater acceptance of self and respect for own worth and potential.	3	3

The full flavor of some of the positive effects of the Workshop may be more adequately conveyed through a few of the verbatim statements of the delegates:

> I feel that I learned more about group work in the three weeks of the Workshop than in the three years of my Seminary training, and I rate the latter *very high* in helping me to achieve basic insight and skill in working with people.
>
> The experience of the Workshop has meant a radical reorientation in my every relationship, professional and nonprofessional. I am now gradually discovering a whole new set of techniques and ways of doing things.
>
> The Workshop was a much more unique experience than the course in the Fall, and it quite swept me off my feet. It raised some questions I haven't answered yet, but more important is the feeling of security it has given me in terms of leadership.
>
> My own sense of worth as an individual was given a boost by the Workshop experience. My sense of inferiority has been in my personality pattern, but the Workshop impressed me with the fact that I need not feel my contribution to be of less value than anyone else's as long as it expresses my real feeling on the subject.
>
> I feel freer in my communication with people. A sense of relaxation is apparent in my professional relationships with people. Much of the feeling that I am the one who knows all the answers — my "market personality" — has taken a back seat.
>
> As a result of the frustration experience when the total group floundered around trying to decide upon plans and program, I became aware of hostility and aggression in myself which I was only dimly aware of before.
>
> I grew a lot — a very great deal. I had some of the most thrilling experiences after I left the Workshop. The next few days' experiences happened on busses, in parks, and in my communicative behavior with others that was never possible previously. I was confident, accepting, free and open. (The doors were still open.) I

> even decided to get married the week after leaving the Workshop, when I had not even seriously been considering marriage previously.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS UPON DELEGATES

A surprisingly small number of self-reference statements indicating negative effects of the Workshop were reported by the delegates. Only three of the fifteen respondents reported any negative effects, and of the fifty-six self-reference statements there were only four that indicated negative effects. Three of these statements, quoted verbatim from the questionnaires, can be examined below:

> From several standpoints the Workshop was a distinct disappointment. Possibly this was due to my misinterpretation of the [announcement]. My primary desire in coming was to learn additional techniques of group process. Instead I found myself a part of an interesting group with half-a-dozen little [researchers] peering at us. Object: a book.

> In general I felt that the experience could be considered on the asset side of my ledger. However, had I not previously had considerable experience and training in this field I doubt that the benefits would have been worth the time or money spent. I distinctly felt that many in the group were "gypped." My reactions will undoubtedly lead you to conclude I came with a set of preconceived ideas and am subsequently irked because the Workshop did not confirm them. *Possibly* so.

> I am the type of person who does not obtain sudden changes on an actionable level as some people claim they do. My growth in such areas is slow, as in the acquisition of new skills or realizations. Hence, I — so to speak — closed the doors which the total Workshop experience opened to me. . . . I looked, saw the vision (and/or ideal) but did not enter. Perhaps I lacked courage. I'm not sure of the reasons.

The fourth negative statement was a rather long and involved description of one specific incident in which one of the delegates felt she was rejected by the group, as a result of which she left the Workshop feeling somewhat disillusioned about groups.

These four statements, although the only negative ones out of a total of fifty-six, indicate that an experience in a self-directing group does produce some negative effects, and that group-centered leadership does not stimulate positive and constructive personal growth in some people to the extent that it does in most.

THE EFFECT OF THE WORKSHOP AS INDICATED BY DELEGATES' POST-WORKSHOP BEHAVIOR

If it can be demonstrated that the members of a training group alter their *behavior* after they leave the training situation to return to their back-home positions, then one has more confidence in the influence that the training experience facilitated significant change and development. Demonstrated changes in behavior, of course, do not constitute proof that the training experience produced the changes. For more reliable proof, it would be necessary to design an experiment using more elaborate methods of controlling other factors that might also produce changes subsequent to the training experience. Nevertheless, an attempt was made to obtain data about the post-Workshop behavior of the delegates in order to check on the other findings obtained during and immediately after the Workshop.

The Follow-up Questionnaire contained two questions designed for this purpose:

1. Have you been aware of any effects of the Workshop, in these months that have followed, on your own *behavior?* If so, what kinds of effects and to what do you attribute them? If not, how do you account for the lack of effect?
2. Can you give a brief account or description of some situation (since the Workshop) in which you as a leader seriously tried to apply some principle or method which was derived from your experience in the Workshop?

The delegates' answers to these questions were analyzed and classified, and will be summarized in the subsequent paragraphs.

Actual Experiences in Trying Out a New Leadership Role

Of the fifteen delegates who returned the questionnaire, thirteen reported at least one group situation in which they had tried out a new and different leadership role. All thirteen reported various degrees of satisfaction with the outcomes of at least one of their experiences, and only three of the thirteen reported some degree of dissatisfaction with certain of their experiences. One additional delegate reported the use of a technique (role-playing) learned at the Workshop, but this was not classified as an attempt to try out a new leadership role.

Four of the delegates reported that some of their attempts at trying a new leadership role taught them what the "limitations" were upon the successful use of a group-centered approach. One delegate, for example, reported that he had learned from experience that "severely handicapped children who had always been waited on hand and foot and medically depended upon an authority-figure doctor" found it difficult to "learn to accept responsibility for their own decisions and planning."

Another delegate stated that she had an experience which "threw her into a dilemma as to what to do in teaching children." She expressed her conflict as one of wanting to "transmit our cultural heritage to the children" but still not "structure" the learning situation for her pupils. She writes, "I've about come to the conclusion that for me as a religious educator the cultural heritage is more important than the unstructured situation."

With the exception of these few delegates who discovered limitations to the use of group-centered leadership, and of the one who crystallized her leadership ideal in a direction somewhat away from the ideal of group-centered leadership, the delegates reported experiences which clearly demonstrated radical changes in their leadership roles and which they evaluated as constructive or successful. It is difficult to summarize these lengthy descriptions so that their full flavor is communicated. Yet certain general aspects deserve comment, and in addition a few of the desciptions will be reproduced verbatim.

First, it was interesting to learn of the variety of situations in which the delegates had tried out the new leadership role. These included such positions as:

1. Teacher of children, high school youngsters, and adults.
2. Minister of a church in a company town where lines of authority between "management" and "worker" church members were tightly drawn.
3. Supervisor of student field workers in a hospital.

4. Chairman of a church committee to plan a parents' program.
5. Religious education director of a young people's group.
6. Settlement house social worker with a group of teen-agers.
7. Leader in a leadership training course.
8. Group discussion leader in a group of young married couples.
9. Therapist of a group of inmates in a county jail.
10. Nursery-school teacher working with a group of parents.
11. Teacher of a class of ninety-five student ministers.

It is clear that the delegates found a wide variety of applications for their newly acquired leadership attitudes and skills. The degree to which the delegates seemed able to generalize their learnings to many new situations adds to our confidence in the effect of the Workshop on the delegates' later behavior.

Specific Leadership Behaviors Tried Out by Delegates. From the reports of the delegates it was apparent that many different leadership behaviors had been tried out, for most of the delegates told what specific things they had tried to do. From the list below it may be seen that the delegates were actually trying to implement some of the most basic principles of group-centered leadership. Their post-Workshop experiences with a new leadership role involved more than superficial changes in leadership behavior. These were the specific behaviors mentioned by the delegates:

1. Transferring total authority from myself, the leader, to the group.
2. Transferring at least partial authority and responsibility to the group.
3. Demonstrating less impatience with rambling remarks of group members, trying more to understand their frame of reference.
4. Shifting responsibility for success of the group to the total group.
5. Stopped trying to convert members to my own faith.
6. Letting members have their say before I jump in.
7. No longer feel I have to talk and "contribute," just because I'm in the professional position.
8. Reflected feelings expressed in the group and demonstrated listening with understanding.
9. Used buzz-sessions in a large group in order to facilitate participation.

10. Can now throw out an idea and then be able to "melt away" without dominating the group's decision.
11. No longer can be directive with a group without examining my own motivation.
12. Allowed the group to construct its agenda.
13. Involved a church group in the process of defining its own long-range goals.
14. Accepted varying viewpoints without defensiveness.
15. Involved students in process of selecting their own reading material for study.
16. Avoided calling my meetings to order, asking for a vote, expecting people to raise hands to speak, sitting in most conspicuous place, talking too much, doing anything that someone else could do and ignoring contributions.

Two Post-Workshop Incidents. Although this list of specific behaviors gives some notion as to what the delegates took away from the Workshop, the full description of some of their experiences provides richer and more concrete evidence of their learnings. One delegate described an incident with a parents' group, as follows:

> The principle which I tried to apply in a group of parents was that of shifting the responsibility for the leadership of the group from my apparent role as a leader to the members of the group. This was attempted first in a smaller committee of eight people called together by myself to plan a parents' program for a future date. I came in late and the group was apparently waiting for me and had done nothing toward getting the meeting under way. I sat down with the group, and they expected me to assume my role as the leader of the group. When I saw that the group was becoming uneasy about the situation, I quite frankly said that I wasn't to be considered as the chairman of the group but would enter into the discussion as an equal with them. I stated the reason of the group's being called together and let it go at that. The going was tough at first. They didn't know where to dig in. One of the more sensitive men of the group began to see that there really was no agenda and that perhaps he had some responsibility in setting the pace. Fortunately he did not domineer and was wise enough to allow others to share the limelight. I tried to tie together statements made from different viewpoints and present their commonal-

> ity. Soon most of the members of the group caught fire and began to set to the task of planning a parents' meeting. To test what the group thought of my original role as a leader I made suggestions which were flatly ignored. Apparently they had forgotten my professional status and were quite willing now to accept me at my face value. The interchange of ideas in a permissive atmosphere resulted in an idea for a program which was theirs and which incidentally had little resemblance to anything I myself would have suggested as a leader of the group if I had assumed the traditional role with the group. Did I have a plan for the meeting? One member of the group caught the idea when he said, "This meeting must have been planned to be unplanned."

Another interesting incident was described by a delegate attempting to work with a Church Board:

> Perhaps the most interesting single experience was that as guest leader for the National Christian Teaching Mission. In theory each church invites someone from out of town to be their guest leader during the mission. The director of the entire mission acted as our guest leader. However, he was unable to remain for our last meeting. I was asked to act as guest leader. This last meeting was concerned with program enlargement. The guest leader was supposed to meet with the official board of the church and tell them what they should do to improve the program of their church. The guest leader was the outside expert who was supposed to examine the church and its needs and then write them a prescription. There were a number of things that the minister and I felt a need for in our church. This would be a good opportunity to tell the board about it. At the same time I felt uneasy about "telling them what to do." After thinking the matter through I realized that the official board of the church was supposed to determine the direction of the church. They knew the situation better than I. If the needs I saw were genuine, they would see them too. If they weren't genuine needs they should be thrown out. I decided that persons can be trusted, and only a program which grows out of the felt needs of persons will succeed in the long run. I conducted the meeting on a buzz-session basis. I presented them with our task — told them that they knew our church. (We had previously had a self-study night with the guest leader.) We were to divide into about six or seven groups

and think about the immediate program before us. What do we want to do in our church in the months which lie ahead?

Each group reported back after about 45 minutes. Each group was supposed to present three or four good ideas to the larger group. In many cases groups mentioned similar programs, but I asked each group to give its report. If there was repetition it merely indicated a strong need. The ideas were written on the blackboard and appended to the minutes of the board. The entire group, after some discussion in the larger group, stood to indicate their support of such a program and read a responsive service of re-dedication. Although it was late, a large number of persons stayed to talk. Many commented that it was the most interesting board meeting they had attended for a long time. Describing such a situation is cold, but at the time the enthusiasm was unbelievable. Recently the board conducted a similar meeting with equally good results. The real proof is this: the idea of holding this last board meeting in this fashion did not originate with me but with the members of the board.

CHANGES IN CONCEPTIONS OF SELF AND IDEAL WITH RESPECT TO LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP ROLES

Another outcome predicted for the delegates of the Workshop was a change in the way they perceived themselves as both leaders and members and in the way they perceived an ideal leader and an ideal group member. If group-centered leadership was actually effective in the Workshop situation, one reasonable measure of its effectiveness would be the extent to which changes occurred in the delegates' conceptions of self and ideal with regard to the roles of leadership and membership, inasmuch as the purpose of the Workshop was to provide a training experience in group behavior. It will be recalled from Chapter 6 that Q-sorts provided the method for measuring such changes. One sorting dealt with leadership characteristics, the other with membership characteristics.

THE PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTERING AND ANALYZING THE Q-SORTS

The procedure for the Q-sorts consisted in having each of ten delegates distribute (sort) the eighty-four cards (see pp. 120–123) along an eleven-point scale ranging from "Least like (or dissimilar)" at one end of the scale to "Most like (or similar)" at the other. A specified number of cards was required at each of the eleven points on the scale, so that at the completion of a single sorting the delegate's cards would have to be distributed in eleven piles as follows:

	Least like										*Most like*
No. of Cards	1	2	6	11	14	16	14	11	6	2	1
Piles	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI

Thus, at the end of a single sorting, for example, a delegate would have placed one card in Pile I, indicating that that particular statement was *least* like how he actually felt or behaved. He also would have placed one card in Pile XI, indicating that that statement was *most* like how he felt. Similarly, in each of the other piles, representing lesser degrees of "likeness" or "unlikeness," he would have placed the exact number of cards indicated above.

A summary picture of the overall design of the Q-sort administrations is as follows:

	Before Workshop	*After Workshop*	*Follow-up*
Leadership Q-sort			
Actual (Self)	x		x
Ideal	x	x	
Membership Q-sort			
Actual (Self)	x	x	x
Ideal	x	x	

This shows that each of ten delegates made a total of nine different Q-sorts. The Actual Leadership Q-sort was not given after the Workshop, because it was felt that immediately after the Workshop none of the delegates would have had an opportunity since their before-Workshop sorting to be a formal leader and therefore would not have an experience on which to base another sorting. We decided instead to wait until the six-months follow-up to administer a second Actual Leadership Q-sort, by which time the delegates would have had leadership opportunities in their back-home groups. Only then would they be able to use a real experience as a basis for describing their actual leadership behavior.

Each sorting yielded a description of a delegate's own characteristics, as in the Actual sorts, or a description of the characteristics of the delegate's ideal, as in the Ideal sorts. Each description could be handled quantitatively because the cards would be distributed in eleven different piles having values from 1 to 11. Comparisons could then be made between different sortings, as for example between a delegate's actual leader characteristics *before* the Workshop and his actual leader characteristics *after* the Workshop, thus indicating the amount of change that had taken place during this period.

The general method for comparing two different sorts was the correlation technique, which furnishes a quantitative index of the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between two sortings.[2] In order to calculate statistical tests of the significance of differences between correlations it was necessary to transform the correlation coefficients (r's) to another statistic, Fisher's z. Consequently, most of our findings will be reported as z's rather than r's.[3]

Some of the findings from the analysis of the Leadership and Membership sortings will be compared with findings from a control group. This comparison was made possible because several months after the end of the Workshop the opportunity arose to administer some of the Q-sorts to a group whose membership was similar in many respects to that of the Workshop group. The leadership approach in the control group, however, was quite different. The members of the control group were ten ministerial students taking a course in a Theological Seminary. The content of the course was similar to that of the Workshop, inasmuch as the course covered aspects of group leadership, personality, pastoral counseling, and group work. Obviously the control group did not match the Workshop group in every respect, but it was the only available group that approximated similarity to the Workshop group with respect to the interests and experience of its members, the content of the subject matter, and the length of the course period. This control group was chosen because it provided a sharp contrast of leadership approaches, for the seminary course was conducted along fairly traditional lines, i.e., assigned readings, organized content, lectures with limited opportunity for discussion, and an examination at the end of the course. Recognizing that this group cannot be considered a carefully matched control group, we are nevertheless including some of the findings from this group as a rough check against those obtained from the Workshop group.

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[2] Readers not familiar with correlations need only keep in mind that these can range from +1.00 (perfect agreement or similarity) to −1.00 (perfect disagreement). The midpoint in this range would be 0.00, indicating no relationship at all or a wholly chance relationship.

[3] To minimize the confusion of those readers not familiar with these statistical procedures, we need to point out that r's which approach +1.00 or −1.00, when transformed to z's, acquire a value greater than the original r's. Thus some of the z's which we shall report will be greater than +1.00, as in the case of an r of +.83 which transforms to a z of +1.19.

LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

The analysis of changes in delegates' leadership characteristics was based upon comparisons between the different sortings of the eighty-four statements in the leadership sort. Ten delegates volunteered to sort the statements before, immediately after, and six months following the Workshop. Before the Workshop the delegates sorted once to describe their own actual leadership and once to describe their ideal of leadership. After the Workshop they sorted for the ideal only, and six months afterward sorted again for their actual leadership.

The Staff Ideal Leader. In order to provide a criterion with which the delegates' sortings might be compared, four of the Workshop staff sorted the leadership statements before and after the Workshop, once to describe their own leadership and once to describe their ideal of leadership:

	Before	*After*
Staff Actual Leader	x	x
Staff Ideal Leader	x	x

First, there was very little difference between the Before Ideal and the After Ideal. The correlations between these two sorts for the four staff leaders were:

	r
Staff Leader A	.85
Staff Leader B	.85
Staff Leader C	.88
Staff Leader D	.88

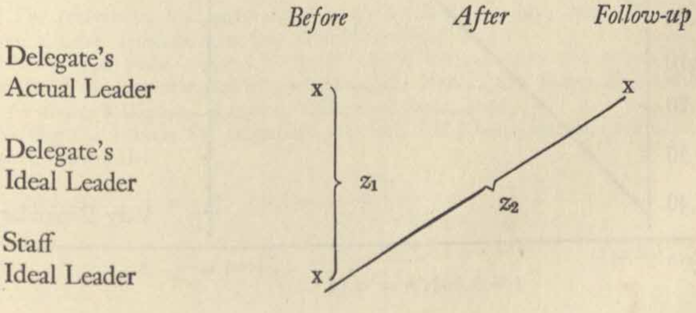
Because the two were correlated so highly, indicating that very little change had taken place, only the Before sort was used in our analysis.

Second, the intercorrelations of the four staff leaders were very high, indicating high agreement among them with regard to an ideal of leadership, as shown below:

	Staff Leader A	Staff Leader B	Staff Leader C	Staff Leader D
Staff Leader A		.64	.78	.60
Staff Leader B			.71	.60
Staff Leader C				.70

Because the agreement between the staff was relatively high and because a single index was desirable for the Staff Ideal, the sorts of the four staff members were combined to make a composite sort. This composite sort, which was called the *Staff Ideal Leader*, was used whenever the staff ideal leader was compared with the delegates' sorts.

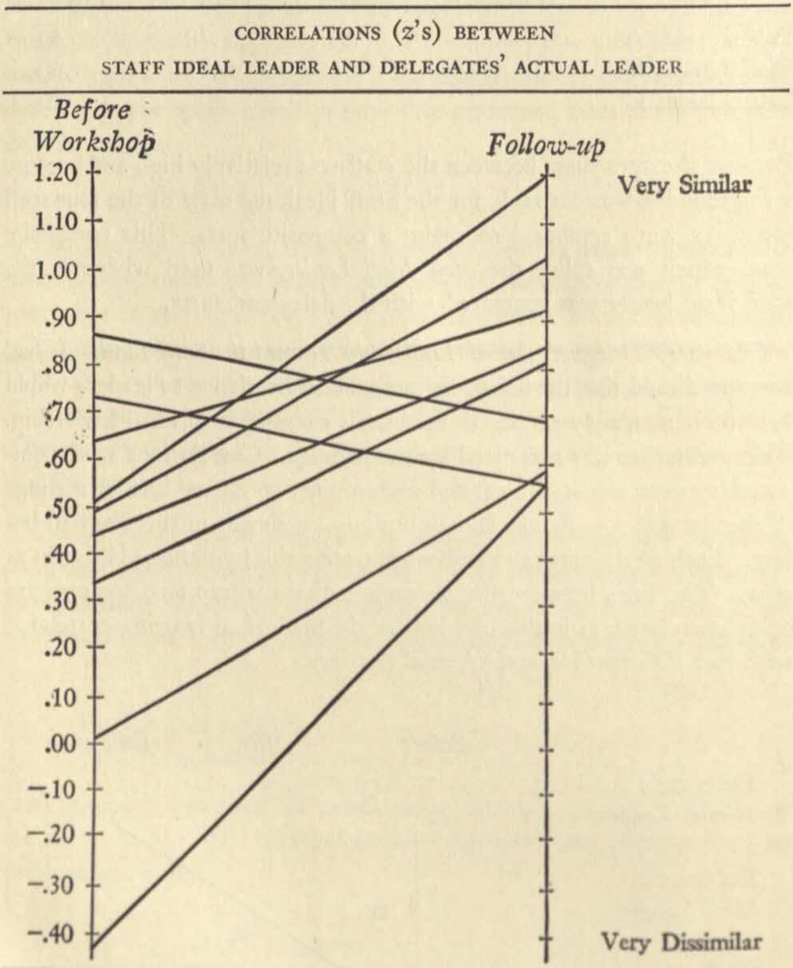
Change of Delegates' Actual Leadership Toward the Staff Ideal. It had been predicted that the delegates' actual characteristics as leaders would become increasingly similar to the staff's conception of ideal leadership. This prediction was supported by the findings. Correlations were computed between the Staff Ideal and each of the two Actual Leader sortings of the delegates — Before and Follow-up, as shown in the diagram below. Each of the sortings involved in testing this hypothesis is shown as an *x*. The lines between the sortings indicate where two sortings are being correlated, as in this case where the Staff Ideal is being correlated with two different Delegate Actual Sortings.



Referring to the above diagram, if z_2 for a particular delegate turned out to be larger than z_1, it would mean that his own leader characteristics six months after the Workshop were more similar to the Staff Ideal of leadership than were his own leader characteristics before the Workshop.

Figure 2

Change in Similarity Between the Delegates' Actual Leader and the Staff Ideal Leader From Before to Follow-up



Mean z_1 = .41 Mean z_2 = .79

$t = 3.362$; $p = <.01$

The actual correlations for the nine delegates[4] are diagrammed in Figure 2, from which it can be seen that seven out of the nine delegates changed in the predicted direction — that is, their actual leadership became more like the Staff Ideal during the period from Before to Follow-up. Six of these seven delegates showed changes large enough to be significant at the .05 level of significance. In other words, changes as large as these would be expected to occur by chance less than 5 times out of 100.[5]

It is interesting to note that the two delegates who changed in the opposite direction and the delegate whose change in the predicted direction was too small to be significant were the three delegates who were *most* like the Staff Ideal Leader before the Workshop. This suggests that the greatest impact of the Workshop with respect to change in the leadership characteristics of the delegates was felt by those delegates who initially deviated the most from the ideal of an effective leader.

The difference between the means was large enough to be significant at less than the .01 level,[6] indicating that a difference as large as this would occur by chance less than 1 out of 100 times. These findings permit the conclusion that the delegates' self-descriptions of their own leadership characteristics changed significantly in the direction of becoming more similar to the staff's conception of ideal leadership.

Change Toward the Delegates' Own Ideal Leader. A like trend was found with respect to the degree of similarity between the delegates' Actual Leader and their own Ideal Leader. Eight out of the nine delegates changed in the direction of becoming more like the Leader whom *they* described as an Ideal Leader immediately after the Workshop. This change was indicated by a comparison of the correlations between

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[4] The analysis of the Leadership sortings is based upon nine delegates, inasmuch as one delegate failed to complete all of his sortings.

[5] Based upon Fisher's formula for SE of diff Between two z's: where $N = 84$ (number of statements sorted by each delegate). From R. A. Fisher, *Statistical Methods for Research Workers.* London: Oliver and Boyd, 1941.

[6] Using the formula for determining the value of t when the data are correlated (paired individuals):

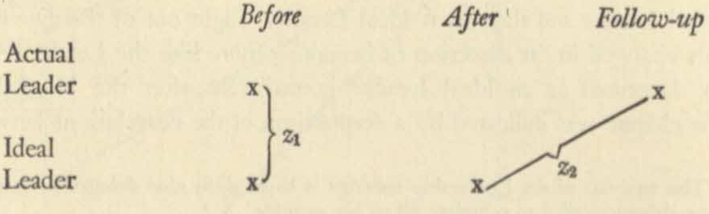
$$t = \frac{M_d}{\sqrt{\dfrac{\dfrac{\Sigma d_s}{N} - M_d^2}{N - 1}}}$$

the delegates' Ideal Leader (After) and Actual Leader (Before) with those between their Ideal Leader (After) and their Actual Leader (Follow-up). The change for six of the eight delegates who became more like their own ideal was large enough to be statistically significant at less than the .05 level. The difference between the two means for the nine delegates (Before and Follow-up) was large enough for significance at the .01 level. The Mean z Before was .42 and the Mean z Follow-up was .89 ($t = 4.349$).

These findings strongly support the hypothesis that the delegates' attitudes and behavior as leaders six months after the Workshop had changed in the direction of the ideal of leadership which they held immediately after the Workshop.

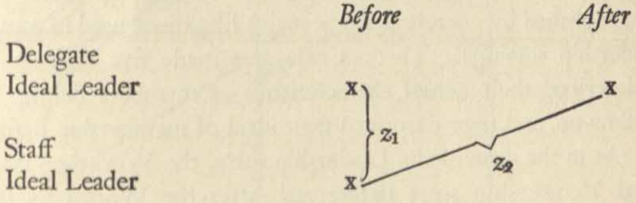
When the delegates' Ideal Leader (Before) was used as a criterion with which to compare their Before and Follow-up Actual Leader, the same tendency was apparent but was less sharp. Again seven out of nine of the delegates increased their similarity to their Ideal (Before), but for the total group the mean difference between the pairs of z's was not quite significant at the .05 level ($t = 2.139$).

One further analysis was made of the delegates' tendency to become more like their own ideal. This involved correlating their Actual Leader and Ideal Leader (Before) and comparing these to the correlations between their Actual Leader (Follow-up) and Ideal Leader (After), as in the following diagram:



Again z_2 was larger than z_1 for seven of the nine delegates, indicating that the Workshop experience brought the delegates' own leadership characteristics closer to their new ideal than their previous leadership characteristics had been to their old ideal. In short, the delegates achieved a closer congruence between what they were and what they wanted to be with respect to leadership characteristics. The difference between Mean z_1 and Mean z_2 in this case was significant at a level between .02 and .05 ($t = 2.795$).

Changes in the Delegates' Conception of the Ideal Leader. One of the most unexpected findings was that the Workshop did not produce changes in the delegates' conceptions of an Ideal Leader. It had been hypothesized that the Delegate Ideal Leader would change in a direction of more similarity to the Staff Ideal Leader. This hypothesis was not supported by the findings, the obvious reason being that the Delegate Ideal Leader was already very similar to the Staff Ideal Leader even before the Workshop (Mean $z = .85$). This finding strongly suggests that the delegates already had a fairly clear conception of an ideal leader's characteristics but they had not been able to achieve this ideal in their own leadership roles. Rather than actually change their ideal, the Workshop enabled the delegates to approach closer to their ideal through a change in their own leadership characteristics. None of the delegates showed a difference between z_1 and z_2, as in the following diagram, large enough for significance at the .05 level. The Mean z_1 was .85 and the Mean z_2 was .97, indicating an insignificant amount of change.



From the findings it seems fairly conclusive that the delegates came to the Workshop with a conception of an ideal leader very similar to the Staff Ideal Leader, and that this conception did not change during the Workshop. Further support of this finding was provided by the high correlation between the delegates' Ideal (Before) and their Ideal (After), the Mean z being .94. This high correlation can be contrasted with the rather low correlation between the delegates' Actual (Before) and Actual (Follow-up) as indicated by a Mean z of .47.

Summary of Findings from Leadership Data. Recognizing the limitations which the small number of delegates imposes, the findings from the sortings of the Leadership statements permit certain general conclusions. With no exceptions, the delegates' conception of an ideal leader before the Workshop was very similar to the Staff Ideal Leader, all nine correlations being large enough for statistical significance at the

.01 level of significance. The Workshop did not significantly change this high correspondence. On the other hand, before the Workshop the delegates' descriptions of their own leadership characteristics differed considerably from the Staff Ideal Leader, but this difference becomes significantly smaller six months after the Workshop. Similarly, the delegates' own leadership characteristics became significantly more like their *own* Ideal, since their Ideals and Actuals before the Workshop differed more than their Ideals and Actuals after the Workshop.

The findings, then, strongly support the hypothesis that changes took place in the delegates' leadership characteristics and that these changes were in the direction of an ideal similar to that of the staff. The delegates did not acquire a different ideal or conception of leadership, but they apparently were enabled to change their own characteristics in the direction of both their own ideal and the staff ideal of leadership.

MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

The analysis of changes in the delegates' membership characteristics was accomplished by correlation procedures like those used in comparing the leadership sortings. The ten delegates made five different sorts. They described their actual characteristics as members Before, After, and Follow-up, and they described their ideal of membership Before and After. As in the case of the Leadership sorts, the Workshop staff also provided Membership sorts Before and After the Workshop, both to describe their own behavior and attitudes and to describe the attitudes and behavior of their ideal member.

Change Toward the Staff Ideal Member. The data from the membership sortings indicated a consistent trend for the delegates' descriptions of their own characteristics as members to become more similar to the staff's composite conception of an ideal group member. This trend is shown in Figure 3, which is based upon comparisons between the three different correlations shown below:

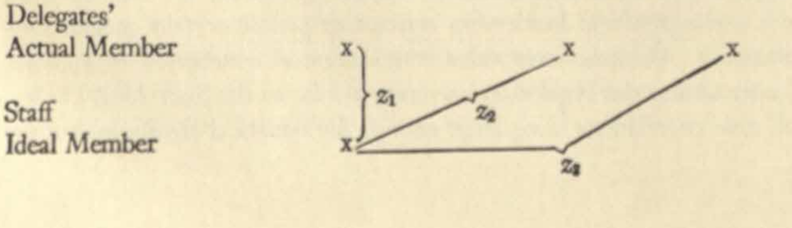


Figure 3

Change in Similarity Between the Delegates' Actual Member and the Staff Ideal Member From Before to After to Follow-up

CORRELATIONS (z'S) BETWEEN
STAFF IDEAL MEMBER AND DELEGATES' ACTUAL MEMBER

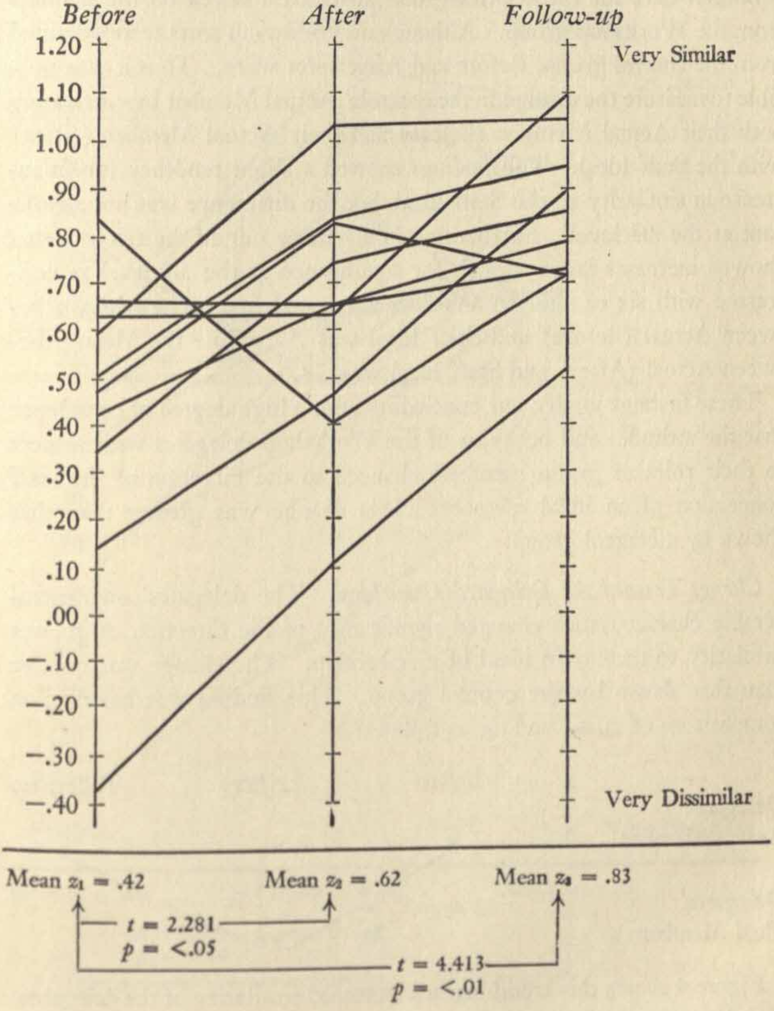


Figure 3 shows that there was a consistent trend in the direction of greater similarity between the delegates' Actual Member and the Staff Ideal Member. The change from Before to After was significant for the group beyond the .05 level ($t = 2.281$), while the change from Before to Follow-up was even larger, being significant beyond the .01 level ($t = 4.413$).

Similar data for the control group provided a check on the findings from the Workshop group. Although no Follow-up sorts were obtained from the control group, Before and After sorts were. Thus it was possible to measure the change in the controls' Actual Member by correlating both their Actual Member (Before) and their Actual Member (After) with the Staff Ideal. The findings showed a slight tendency for an increase in similarity to the Staff Ideal, but the difference was not significant at the .05 level. Furthermore, only three out of the ten students showed increases large enough for significance at the .05 level as contrasted with six of the ten Workshop respondents. The Mean z between Actual (Before) and Staff Ideal was .57, while the Mean z between Actual (After) and Staff Ideal was .73.

These findings justify our concluding with a high degree of confidence that the attitudes and behavior of the Workshop delegates with respect to their roles as group members changed in the direction of the staff conception of an ideal member. This change was greater than that shown by a control group.

Change Toward the Delegates' Own Ideal. The delegates' own membership characteristics changed significantly in the direction of greater similarity to their own ideal of membership. The change was greater than that shown by the control group. This finding was based upon comparisons of z_1, z_2, and z_3, as follows:

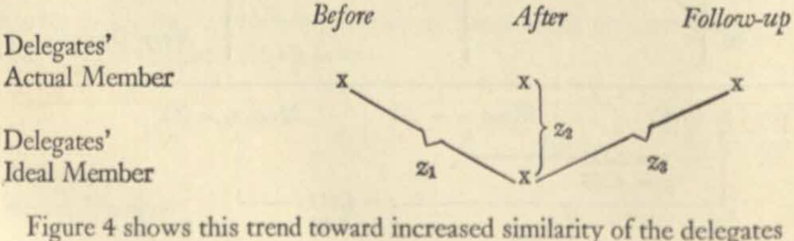
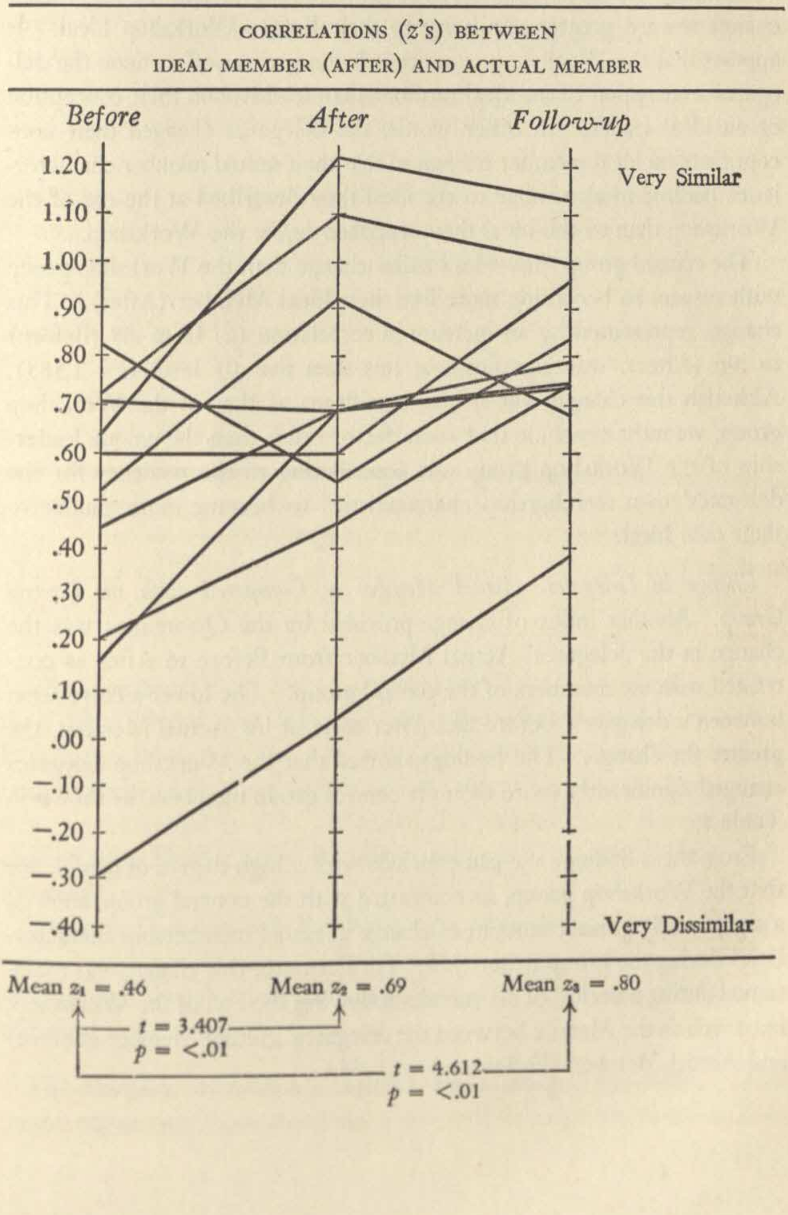


Figure 4 shows this trend toward increased similarity of the delegates actual membership characteristics to their own Ideal Member (After)

Figure 4

Change in Similarity Between Delegates' Actual Member and Their Ideal Member (After) From Before to After to Follow-up



It can be seen that both the change from Before to After and the change from Before to Follow-up were significant at the .01 level.

Unlike the delegates' actual *leadership* characteristics, their actual *membership* characteristics showed only a slight and nonsignificant change toward greater similarity to their Before-Workshop Ideal. It appears that the Workshop experience had a greater effect upon the delegates' conception of an ideal member than it did upon their conception of an ideal leader. In other words, the delegates changed their conception of an ideal member enough so that their actual member characteristics became more similar to the ideal they described at the *end* of the Workshop than to the ideal they described *before* the Workshop.

The control group showed a smaller change than the Workshop group with respect to becoming more like their Ideal Member (After). This change, represented by an increase in correlation (z) from .69 (Before) to .96 (After), was significant at less than the .05 level ($t = 2.585$). Although this change was not as significant as that of the Workshop group, we must conclude that some factor other than the unique leadership of the Workshop group was contributing to the tendency for the delegates' own membership characteristics to become more similar to their own Ideal.

Change in Delegates' Actual Member as Compared with the Control Group. Another index of change provided by the Q-sort data was the change in the delegates' Actual Member from Before to After as contrasted with the members of the control group. The lower a correlation between a delegate's Before and After sorts of his Actual Member, the greater the change. The findings showed that the Workshop delegates changed significantly more than the control group members, as shown in Table 6.

From these findings we can conclude with a high degree of confidence that the Workshop group, as contrasted with the control group, showed a significantly greater amount of change in actual membership characteristics during the group experience. Furthermore, this change was maintained during a period of six months following the end of the Workshop, inasmuch as the Mean z between the delegates' Actual Member (Before) and Actual Member (Follow-up) was .55.

Table 6

Degree of Similarity Between Delegates' Actual Member (Before) and Actual Member (After) as Contrasted with Control Group

CORRELATIONS (z's) BETWEEN ACTUAL MEMBER (BEFORE) AND (AFTER)	
Workshop Group	*Control Group*
.31	.59
.33	.62
.44	.69
.55	.83
.55	.85
.58	.87
.62	.89
.65	.91
.65	.97
.78	1.01
Mean .55	Mean .82

$t = 4.48$
$p = < .01$

The Consistency of the Delegates' Conception of the Ideal Member. Like their Ideal Leader, the delegates' Ideal Member changed very little. Before the Workshop the delegates' Ideal Member correlated highly with the Staff Ideal Member (Mean $z = .84$), while after the Workshop this increased only to .94. The control group likewise showed little change, their Mean z being .93 before and increasing only slightly after the course to .99.

These findings for both the Workshop group and the control group indicate that people seem to know what a group member should be ideally, even though their own attitudes and behavior do not approach this ideal.

The Delegates' Membership Effectiveness as Judged by Others. One might expect that those delegates whose self-descriptions at the end of the Workshop period correlated highest with the Staff Ideal Member would also be judged by other delegates as the ones who were most effective as members of the Workshop group. This was one of the hypotheses formulated by the staff prior to the Workshop. To test this hypothesis, all the delegates were asked at the end of the Workshop to rank each person in the group with respect to his effectiveness as a group member during the Workshop period. The rankings made by all the delegates were combined, giving one composite ranking for each person in the group. Then the names of the ten delegates who sorted the Membership statements were selected from this list, and each was given a rank from 1 to 10 based upon his position in the rankings for the total group. This gave a rough index of the relative effectiveness of these ten delegates as judged by others.

This ranking was then correlated with the rank order of the same ten delegates with respect to degree of similarity of their Actual Member (After) sort to the Staff Ideal Member, the delegate with greatest similarity being given a rank of 1, and so on. The correlation between these two rankings was practically zero ($r = .053$), indicating no relationship between judged effectiveness and similarity to the Staff Ideal Member. Similarly there was no relationship between judged effectiveness and similarity of delegates' Actual Member (After) to their own Ideal Member (After), the correlation being .031.

In view of these findings it must be concluded that the degree of similarity between the delegates' self-described membership characteristics and a Staff Ideal was not related to the degree of effectiveness as a member in the judgment of others in the group. Nor was the degree of similarity between the delegates' self-described characteristics and their own Ideal related to the judgments of others.

These findings point up an inconsistency between two different criteria of an effective group member. This raises a puzzling issue — are we to question the validity of the self-sorts or of the ratings? The two were measuring two very different variables — how one appears to oneself and how one appears to others — yet why were these two not positively related? First, we might question whether the Staff Ideal was a good criterion of effective attitudes and behavior of a group member. The fact that there was such high agreement about an ideal member both among the staff and between all the delegates and the staff even *before* the Workshop suggests that the Staff Ideal represented some kind of valid picture of an effective member — or else why would such an ideal be so universally accepted? One might then ask if the delegates were describing accurately their own attitudes and behavior before and after the Workshop. Before the Workshop many of the delegates described their Actual attitudes and behavior as being quite divergent from their own Ideal, a fact which suggests that the delegates were not then averse to describing themselves accurately. But how about their Actual sort *after* the Workshop? Was there an unconscious tendency to deceive themselves or the staff that their Actual attitudes and behavior had changed in the direction of their Ideal? We have no way of knowing this, except to point to the findings from the control group. We can be certain that such a tendency did not operate in that group to the extent that it did in the Workshop, because the members of that group changed less. So if there were such a tendency in the Workshop group why did it not operate in the control group? Finally, we can point to the data obtained from the Follow-up Questionnaire in which so many of the delegates described attitudinal and behavioral changes as a result of the Workshop. One hesitates to question the reliability of these reports, especially when the delegates would have no apparent reason to report falsely six months after leaving the Workshop.

This leaves us with an evaluation of the ratings. First, the ratings required the delegates to rank each other with respect to effectiveness throughout the Workshop, whereas the Q-sorts asked the delegates to describe themselves as of that moment, the end of the Workshop. This may have accounted for some of the difference between the two. Second, the sociometric technique resulted in placing five of the ten delegates very close together, in a virtual tie for the middle ranks. In other words it failed to differentiate between half of the ten delegates. This lack of dispersion would account for some of the inconsistency between the sociometric ratings and the self-sorts.

Summary of Findings from Membership Sorts. The findings from the numerous analyses of the Membership sorts seem fairly consistent. The delegates came to the Workshop with a conception of the characteristics of an ideal group member that was very similar to the ideal of the staff. This did not change significantly during the Workshop, although it changed more than their Leader Ideal. Their ideal of a group member was also very similar to that of the control group, inasmuch as each correlated approximately the same with the Staff Ideal (z's of .84 and .93). Similarly, the control group's conception of an ideal member did not change significantly during their course of instruction.

However, both the Workshop group and the control group initially described *their own* membership characteristics as much less similar to the Staff Ideal and to their own Ideal. The Workshop group's characteristics then changed significantly, during and following the Workshop, in the direction of the Staff Ideal, yet this was not the case with the control group. In addition, the Workshop members showed a more significant change than the control group with respect to their attitudes and behavior becoming more like their own Ideal (After).

The Workshop members also demonstrated more change in their own actual characteristics during the Workshop than did the control group during its course of instruction, and the difference between the two groups with respect to amount of change was significant at the .01 level, in favor of the Workshop group.

Finally, though it was predicted that delegates whose Actual attitudes and behavior were most like the Staff Ideal Member immediately after the Workshop would be judged by the group as most effective as members of the Workshop, this was not supported by the findings.

Part Three

CASE STUDY: AN INDUSTRIAL SITUATION

Several years after the completion of the Workshop study, the writer served as a psychological consultant to a small industrial organization in the Midwest. He was brought into this company principally because the Assistant to the Vice President was seeking professional psychological assistance to help him cope with some of the organization's human relations problems. Intrigued by some of the principles underlying client-centered psychotherapy and group-centered leadership, this energetic and rather venturesome young executive wanted to explore the possibilities of applying some of these principles in his relationships with other management personnel and the foremen group.

Shortly after the beginning of the consultant relationship with the company, this executive was shifted from his staff position to a line position, that of Plant Superintendent in charge of all production in the organization. There he saw an opportunity to experiment with group-centered leadership, using the writer in his capacity as a consultant both to help him discover effective and consistent ways of implementing this leadership approach and also to help him work through some of his own personal problems, which of necessity came into sharper focus because of his self-imposed demands to become a "therapeutic" or facilitating leader of his foremen.

Sometime during the course of the relationship with this executive, the writer asked him if he would be willing to keep careful records of his experience, with the idea of later contributing to the writer's book. Chapter 12 is the outcome of this man's efforts to describe his brief but profitable experience. In his own words he summarizes his early and disappointing efforts to promote effective human relations. Then he attempts to condense in a few pages what obviously was a very complex and dynamic experience — the introduction of a leadership approach that was radically different from what the supervisory group had been accustomed to.

The writer has appended to this account a concluding chapter, in order to report some of the interesting findings from a follow-up evaluation of the outcomes of this executive's leadership. These findings supplement and enrich the statement of outcomes written by the executive himself in Chapter 12, inasmuch as the follow-up study utilized data furnished by others in the organization — the foremen and the management group.

Group-Centered Leadership in an Industrial Organization: A Case Study*

12

THE ORGANIZATION

The organization normally employs about 325 men and women in the plant, office, and outside sales force. The firm, over seventy-five years old, is a metal working plant, manufacturing a machine product for consumer use. The plant has complete facilities to manufacture its products, beginning with brass and gray iron foundries, and including machine shop, assembly, paint, packaging, and shipping departments, as well as normal service departments, such as tool room, maintenance, and receiving.

To understand the following description, the reader should keep in mind three distinct levels of management: top management; executive department heads; and supervisory group. Top management consists of the Chairman of the Board and the President. Executive department heads are the Sales Manager, the Controller and Treasurer, the Chief Engineer, the Director of Purchases, the Vice President (in charge of Plant Property and General Counsel on manufacturing), and the Plant

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* This chapter has been written by James Richard.

Superintendent. The supervisory group includes about ten foremen, the Production Control Manager, the Personnel Director, and the Production Engineer. In the course of six years, this organizational structure has shifted in various details, but the three levels of authority have remained essentially the same.

EARLY ATTITUDES AND METHODS

I came to the company with clearly defined notions that industrial life was a rather grim affair. I felt factories to be oppressive of individual spirit, ridden with strife and tension, and guided by men who were not as sensitive to human needs and feelings as they were to production needs and costs. I possessed a strong urge to change the elements of the factory system which I considered monotonous and depressing for workers.

This strong sympathy for the workers moved me to seek ways of representing their needs within the management. Working in the Personnel Department, I tried various means of bringing forcefully to management's attention the workers' and foremen's need for self-expression. Pointing out arbitrary use of authority, I sought ways of providing workers and foremen with more opportunities for participation, more attention to their problems, and more information about the company. Means were sought to give employees more voice in decisions on matters affecting them directly.

To accomplish some of these changes, I relied upon a high degree of support and authority from top management. My evaluations in matters of human relations bore considerable weight in top management's thinking, and I used this influence to help workers and foremen press their wants upon the executive department heads. I believed that an upward flow of communication, forced upon traditional-minded executives, would change their attitudes and behavior.

Use of Power and Authority

Use of my close relationship with top management to bring power and authority to bear upon the executives worked like this. Observing an incident wherein a department head had taken a position and issued instructions which were resulting in negative results as they passed down the line, I accumulated information from workers and foremen by listening sympathetically to their complaints. I could then determine which elements of this information were filtered out in the process of slanting facts for consumption at higher levels as the complaints were passed along, and at about what level the department head was being insulated from the feelings beneath him in the organization. Equipped with this information, I was able to formulate suggestions to the President and demonstrate considerable knowledge of feelings and situations in the plant. Often neither he nor the department head in charge had access to this information. In order to accomplish something on behalf of the workers or the foremen, I would sketch the problem for the President, suggest a solution, and offer to help. By special assignment from the President, I would then be linked to the department head to "help" him work out the problem. In this way the President and the department heads began to depend upon me to help iron out difficulties with people in the plant.

Use of Workers' Opinion

In order that I might be able to stay close to the feelings and problems of workers and foremen, I was careful to respect their confidence. I was able to aid them by tactful use of my special status. After a period of time foremen and workers observed changes in conditions, and it was not hard for them to see that my influence had brought the changes about. By helping to solve problems I was able to demonstrate to the President the importance of my role in the improvement of employee relations. The department heads learned that I had special access to the President, as well as special access to information from the organization below, and therefore accepted my "help" in untangling some of the complex "human relations" in the organization. By means of careful, tactful manipulation of information, situations, and authority, I was able to gather more and more influence in the organization.

Use of Formalized and Structured Group

In addition to relating myself to top management through use of special assignments, and to workers and foremen by tactful use of the information I gathered from them, I also used some new forms of organization to force changes.

Top management had created a formal structure consisting of a "management committee" and a "staff committee." The executive department heads made up the management committee, which was chaired by the President. I was a member of this committee. The immediate subordinates of this group were formed into a "staff committee," and included plant foremen and junior administrative assistants to the department heads. I was delegated chairman of this committee, and conducted weekly meetings. The actual supervisors of these men did not attend. Also an employee "forum" was organized, which developed procedures for worker meetings on paid company time.

My role in these groups was to work out and implement a program for dealing with human relations matters. I attended management meetings, chaired staff meetings, organized and moderated forum meetings. These devices were used by management, supervisors, and workers to facilitate communication, to make decisions, to form policies, to deal with problems of pay, retirement, benefits, and working conditions, and to communicate management's plans, policies, and assessments of business conditions. Following are two examples of how I operated with these structured groups.

Workers' Forum. The way the forum served factory workers is well illustrated by the affair of the foot-gate in the fence. The fence surrounding the plant had only one exit — an automobile gate, which took the shop workers about 100 yards out of their way to get to the parking lot. A foot-gate built into the fence directly at the employees' point of exit from the plant would give shop men direct access to the parking lot. (Executives and white-collar personnel parked inside the fence, near the buildings.) For a long time the shop employees had nursed a grievance about this matter; it was a real thorn of dissatisfaction. In staff meetings, foremen would raise the complaint time and again. Usually I wrote the minutes for staff meetings, and I entered the complaint in the minutes as often and as tactfully as I considered effective to get managerial action. Some of the management committee considered the complaint unjustified and were unwilling to put the foot-gate in. Even the President was opposed to the idea.

Eventually, with the creation of the forum, employees rose to their feet in meetings and asked for a gate in the fence near the exit. I registered this grievance in the forum minutes, which were mimeographed and distributed to all employees and management.

Shortly afterward the foot-gate was installed by order of the President, who made no comments; the department heads who had opposed it grumbled, the foremen sighed with mixed relief and chagrin that *their* efforts had not been able to get results, and the workers felt a sense of victory. I was perceived as the key person in this process.

Office Forum. A second example of my methods of operating with the structured groups is afforded by the matter of office hours, which had been traditionally established for years. One spring the department heads decided to change the office hours during the summer months. On the whole, the change worked fairly well, but a number of the office workers and department heads were quite unhappy about the new summer hours. The following spring, as the issue was about to arise again, there were many conflicting ideas.

The department heads had changed their minds about summer office hours, and were inclined to set another policy for the coming season. I could see, however, that the policy they were about to establish arbitrarily would not satisfy the office people. The department heads were on the verge of accommodating their own interests, leaving it up to the clerical and supervisory group to adjust as best they could. I asked the managing group to allow me to carry this matter through the office supervisory group and down to the clerical group to see if a compromise solution could not be worked out that would be more acceptable to everyone. Largely because of the President's support, the managing group agreed to let me try. In a series of forum meetings, the problem was worked through and settled.

My role was one of carrying the problem through the formalized structure, using group discussion to bring out the variety of opinions, needs, and interests, on which in turn the final compromise solution was based. Through this process, which took about two weeks, the issue was solved very successfully in terms of almost total acceptance of the summer office hours.

By and large, however, the managing department heads were not happy with the process. Not because they opposed the solution, but because they felt too much time had been consumed in the process of reaching it, and because they perceived this consultative method as a threat to their status, authority, and prerogatives. The other groups were pleased with the result and with the opportunity the process had given them to assert themselves.

CONSEQUENCES OF FORCING AND MANIPULATIVE METHODS

These methods seemed to work well and to bring considerable success in promoting greater participation, greater interest, freer communication, and stronger identification of people with the company. I felt we had discovered ways of implementing more effective group management, group participation, and group solution of problems.

However, after four years of this work I began to be troubled. Something was going wrong. I re-examined the course I had followed, and to my surprise discovered unexpected consequences of my methods. My initial goal had been to urge and lead people along the path of more voluntary and cooperative participation and to change the traditional authoritarian attitude of the department heads. Actually the opposite had occurred. Instead of releasing free and creative participation, I had merely accomplished a transfer of power and authority. To summarize simply, I had:

1. Used a vaguely defined staff position to gain access to the informal workings of the organization. This gave me information which I could use to gain influence.
2. Artfully related myself to top management and to workers and supervisors in order to put pressure on managing department heads.
3. Used the formal organization structure, applying certain group consultation procedures, to put pressure on one segment of the organization.

These activities resulted in the following consequences:

1. Much actual power and authority was merely transferred from the formally delegated department heads to me. This power and authority which I now held I was using through indirect or informal procedures.
2. Power and authority were perceived by the organization to be

vested in me, not through clearly defined delegation but under the guise of an employee relations program.

3. The total organization, to a considerable degree, had become dependent upon me for the implementation of many matters not really my responsibility. The contrived formal structure of groups had no functional logic but forced the organization into an inflexible stratification based on authority levels.
4. The department heads abrogated direct responsibility for employee relations and left the whole area up to me.
5. This unnatural arrangement, although apparently effective at first, had gradually become ineffectual because normal communication lines had been short-circuited and the informal manipulations had become more and more contrived.
6. The learnings of the lower strata of the organization were that this was simply another way of asserting authority, but it seemed to work in their favor.
7. The department heads did not change their attitudes about the use of authority, but simply devised ways, as a group and as individuals, of protecting themselves. They actually built up a stronger antipathy for group processes and a suspicion of collaborative and consultative procedures which they had seen used mainly in a manipulative way.

As I came to understand my mistakes, my own basic attitude changed. I emerged with two new convictions: that the promotion of democratic procedures can never be permanently and soundly achieved by undemocratic means, and that permanent sound social change in an industrial organization must spread slowly, with due account taken of the needs and feelings of all the people in the total organization.

REORGANIZATION OF IDEAS ABOUT LEADERSHIP

Recognition of my mistakes did not come to me all at once, but was the result of a series of experiences. First, I began to chafe under a sense of growing burden as events grew less spontaneous and more contrived. Next, with the introduction of some Psychological Consultants, an overt and sudden outburst of resentment was precipitated toward me from the managerial personnel. This brought home to me with shocking clarity the hurt I had been causing them by my methods. As a result, I searched deeply for more understanding of my own behavior and its consequences.

Following is a brief sketch of the reordering of my ideas and the influences which contributed to the change in my beliefs and attitudes.

1. I became aware of a new concept of leadership which emphasized the leader's own attitudes and behavior as the greatest determinant in the behavior of group members. I became specifically aware of nondirective aspects of leadership and participation as outlined by Thomas Gordon (33).
2. I obtained a great deal of help through personal counseling from Thomas Gordon, who worked in the organization in a counseling capacity. I developed an insight into the consequences of my earlier attitudes and behavior, and adjusted my attitudes and my goals. I also learned a great deal about how to function effectively as a group-centered leader.
3. Through consultation with Thomas Gordon and Chris Argyris, I learned a great deal about the limits to participative management and group-centered leadership in an industrial organization. A clearer knowledge of organizational dynamics helped me to adjust more effectively to the realities of my situation, so that I was better able to adjust my behavior toward the executive members of the company with acceptance rather than aggression.
4. I learned what pitfalls there are for a leader in the evaluative, diagnostic kind of interaction with people which acts as a barrier to communication and understanding. The most succinct and useful statement of this thought came from Carl R. Rogers (80).
5. I became aware how important it is for a leader to enter into the frame of reference of another person in order to understand and communicate with him. The writings of Carl R. Rogers (76), Thomas Gordon (33), and Chris Argyris (5) were all helpful.
6. I learned a good deal about a theory of social groupings, subordinate dependency, leader-centered behavior, and organizational dynamics that was helpful to me in pointing out what I wished to avoid as leadership practices. Most helpful in this area were some of the writings of Chris Argyris, at that time in manuscript, but since published in book form.[1]

Hence when I became Plant Superintendent in charge of production, I had not changed my ideas about workers, office people, and foremen, or about factory life in general. But I had acquired a new sensitivity for the problems of the industrial administrator. So I approached my new job with the hope of adopting group-centered leadership principles in a way that should take into account not only the contemporary concepts of the importance of people, but also some of the problems and limitations involved in making changes in the time-honored practices of traditional factory management.

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[1] Chris Argyris, *Executive Leadership* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1953).

A GROUP-CENTERED ADMINISTRATION

As Plant Superintendent it seemed to me that good administration would best be assured by operating the factory through a leadership method that supported men in the use of their own capacities, rather than by controlling, guiding, and manipulating them. I devoted most of my time and attention to implementing this principle. Most of my work involved problem-centered, face-to-face discussion with individuals or groups. Working this way, we established policies, made decisions, issued instructions, and carried on the business of running the factory.

I believe there are some notable differences in a group-centered leader's administration as contrasted with that of the traditional leader-centered manager. The following description will try to point out these differences.

Establishing an Atmosphere

My objective was to develop strong cohesion within the group of foremen and staff men themselves, with stronger bonds among them as a group than between myself and each one of them individually. I hoped to create an atmosphere that was conducive to greater self-reliance — first, of each member of the group upon himself, and second, of the group upon itself as a group.

I worked in a large conference room and used a conference table, not a desk. I did not want to be saddled with a plushy, formal office. An office can be a place where the boss receives you. In this kind of atmosphere the boss sometimes feels compelled to advertise, "The door of my office is always open to you." My experience had been that men at work sometimes do better if they can put their feet up and lean back, without a sense of intruding in someone else's private domain.

As the men used the room, I responded to their way of acting so that gradually the room was arranged to meet their use of it. In time we managed to create an atmosphere where a man could put his feet up, cuss, slam his fist down, or laugh out loud. Castings, blue prints, or work sheets often covered the table. It was not an office. It was a place to cut loose and get things off your chest — a place where men of action could apply their minds or let their feelings go.

The room was open but it was also a place where two men could sit in privacy and talk alone. This developed as the group learned to work together and acquired more respect and sensitivity to their cohorts' feelings. Whenever I was in close discussion with someone, others sensed it and intruded only long enough to say, "Give me a buzz when you're through, will you?" or "Put me on the list sometime today," or "When you guys get through here, I'd like to get in." Sometimes it sounded more like, "Oh, hell, I'll come back next week!"

Sometimes a grouping of men who wanted to work something out together used the room, ejecting me. I frequently came into the room and found a cluster of foremen working out a problem. If I felt not directly involved, I left and worked elsewhere until they were finished. Occasionally foremen used the room for meetings or individual discussions with some of their men.

In this working conference room were hung some large chart pads of cheap drawing paper which invited writing or sketching with red or black grease pencils. Very often men cannot formulate something easily in words, but they can point to it or draw it. Words sometimes confuse more than they clarify. A gesture toward a sketch can sometimes speak paragraphs. These pads were used as a conference aid and as a means for illustrating ideas or discussions.

The physical setting was merely an outward manifestation of a basic attitude. This attitude was also demonstrated through interpersonal contacts. I sought to reduce to a minimum the dependency which would come from close supervision by me, with all the controls, advice, decision-making, and problem-solving on an authoritarian basis. This was not to deny a difference in degree of authority, but rather to de-emphasize the difference as much as possible and to create as much opportunity as possible for independent action.

In order to develop this kind of atmosphere I spent more of my time in my conference room and less time out in the plant. Only after the relationships that I sought with members of the supervisory group had been established did I alter this habit.

In my own conduct I strove to focus attentively on individuals, and to respond warmly and with acceptance of their problems. I tried also to give openly my own feelings, reactions, and ideas. In general, I worked for an atmosphere of give-and-take, striving as much as possible to gain acceptance and use of my contributions on the strength of their merit rather than my rank.

GENERAL OPERATING METHODS

The essence of my daily work was to make as many face-to-face contacts as possible, both with individuals and with groups. Most of my work was done in one of the following kinds of situations:

1. Individual discussions, initiated most frequently by the other person but occasionally by me.
2. Small group discussions, almost always initiated by one or more of the men involved, and focused on problems arising from daily work activities.
3. Small group discussions that expanded as the men started to work on a problem and then found it necessary to include additional interested members.
4. Individual or group meetings initiated by me in which I specifically raised matters leading to establishment of procedures, policies, action programs, decisions. These were usually meetings in which I first presented matters in terms of my own problems and limits, and then allowed the group to take over and discuss the problem in their way.
5. Formal meetings, regularly scheduled, with a formal agenda. Meetings of this type tended to be mainly for a general exchange of information about a variety of problems. Some decision-making was involved, but more often they led to subsequent subgroup meetings for specific problem-solving.

THE LEADER'S FUNCTIONS

My role varied in these contacts according to the situation. Different situations required different kinds of behavior on my part, and it seemed as important that I be aware of the differences as that I possess the skills of coping with the situations.

Frequently I carried out a rôle not unlike that of a *counselor*. A member of the supervisory group would bring a problem of a very personal sort involving rather deep feelings and attitudes. In such situations I attempted to listen carefully and demonstrate my understanding by reflecting back to the person the essential feelings and attitudes he was expressing. On other occasions personal problems grew out of, or were mixed in with, plant problems, thus calling for both the therapeutic functions of a counselor and the more fact-giving functions of a resource person.

Another function I carried out was that of providing members of the supervisory group the *authority channel* through which they could obtain sanction on matters outside their own area of authority and independence.

A third function consisted of *facilitating communication* in a group situation, much as the group-centered leader does in a discussion group. Here I simply reflected the meaning of statements, linked together the statements of different speakers, requested clarification when the meaning of statements was not apparent, and so on.

A fourth function was that of *accumulating facts* from my own records, from the foremen, and from others in the organization, for the purpose of organizing them and making them available for use by some group in the process of problem-solving.

A fifth function consisted in providing a therapeutic atmosphere for a group of persons deeply involved in a problem at the feeling level. Here my role was very much like that of a *group therapist*, carrying out a therapeutic function for individuals interacting on a plane of feeling where they had never met before.

A sixth function was that of being a *spokesman for the supervisors* in order to protect their interest or represent their needs at a level of authority beyond their own.

A seventh function was that of *communicating the limits* within which the supervisors were allowed freedom to operate, and communicating what top management expected of the supervisors.

ARRANGING MEETINGS

In a typical day, individuals or clusters of men — two or three or more — would bring in problems. My first response to a question raised by someone was to listen attentively and try to make sure I could determine the issue. A specific technical matter was sometimes quite simple. If it was a surface problem that seemed to cover a deeper one, I attended to it with a sharp sense for feeling as well as for what was being spoken. I made a specific note of each request for attention, and then focused carefully on urgencies. Meetings were arranged according to the urgencies felt by the members.

It was common for someone to poke his head around the door and say, "Can I get on the list sometime today?" I always carefully noted such a request and later, if detained, called or otherwise contacted the person. Each request for attention was carefully followed up as quickly as possible. Sometimes it was possible to defer matters for days, meanwhile working out a future agenda with the persons involved.

Record-Keeping

At each meeting I dated a note pad, listed all members present, labeled the subject, and made relevant notes. Sometimes I did this on the large wall pads. Frequently when conclusions were reached, I asked the members what to write, and I always read these notes back to them.

The notes were kept informally and were treated as the property of the men involved at the time. I carefully avoided the attitude of using note-taking in order to "pin somebody down," or as a prod or a control. In note-taking, as in responding to people's statements, I was always careful never to go beneath the actually stated words and meanings.

Collaboration and Participation

The essence of this way of working was the collaborative and participative pattern that developed. Earlier experiences with traditional techniques of supervision had taught the foremen and staff men that the proper and safe thing to do was to determine — before they acted — what the boss wanted, what decisions he was making, and which way the wind was blowing. My intention was to act in such a way that they could learn that their departments were, in fact, their own to run and that decision-making was a process which did not exclude me, but which included them in an important way as individuals and as an interdependent group.

My method was to establish as much freedom as possible for the men to work things out together or independently, and to foster an atmosphere of safety to learn from mistakes or experience rather than to teach men it was not safe to make mistakes. I also sought to establish a free and fluid atmosphere where much of the arranging, the guiding, and the initiating was done by the men themselves as they responded to their work situations.

As the foremen became accustomed to this system of working together, my work with them dealt mainly with problems centered in the breakdown of group cohesion or in individual distress. I sought to be on hand to help by applying skills and attention that did not solve the problems but aided the men in solving them.

Working through problems, I always contributed whatever I could that seemed of relevant merit in itself. I never withheld any of my own information or opinions or judgments at the time they were appropriately called for — in the context of a discussion. However, I was always careful to identify the sources of my information or judgments, in order that my contributions could be evaluated in terms of their merit rather than of my authority position.

INITIAL IMPACT OF GROUP-CENTERED LEADERSHIP

Reaction of the Supervisory Group (*Foremen*). At first the foremen were not accustomed to being invited to participate, being asked if they wished to participate, and having their needs accommodated. For a while their reactions were mixed. I believe they were inspirited at the outset, feeling a sense of release from the close and sometimes arbitrary supervision that they had previously known. For example, early in my experience, one of the foremen reacted to my care in consulting him with: "Oh, don't be so damned polite — go ahead and tell me what you want!" Several months later, however, the same foreman said: "You might put it a little too easy sometimes, but it's good and straight. Even if it hurts sometimes, I believe the fellas appreciate a little straight poker for a change."

Mingled with this feeling of release, however, was a feeling of uncertainty. Some of the men did not want to lose the dependency relationship to authority which they were accustomed to — even though they chafed under the frustrations they had sometimes experienced from that same authority. For instance, one day an executive spoke rather harshly and arbitrarily to one of the foremen in the foreman's own department and in front of all his men. The foreman, in turn, responded by barking orders at his men and generally riding herd on them. I saw a number of the men wink at each other as if to say, "They've got him flustered today!" Later on, however, the foreman said to me: "Well, you have to hand it to the old —— though; if he hadn't put it to us like that we might not have got the job done. You know, I think we need a prod every so often, just to keep us on our toes." Yet at the same time, the supervisory group showed a tendency to use its newly found freedom to vent some pent-up feelings against the executive group.

This mixture of feelings on the part of the foremen group was expressed in two ways: (*a*) efforts of various kinds to make me an authoritarian boss, and (*b*) an aggressive, almost antagonistic attitude toward some of the department heads. Some foremen tried to get me to tell them what to do or to reassure them that what they were doing was right. Some pressed me to take punitive steps. Others — and sometimes the whole group — sought to bring pressure to bear as a group against what they felt to be the assertion of arbitrary authority by the executive group above them.

Reaction of the Executive Group. The reactions of the managing executive group were both causes and results of the aggressiveness shown by the supervisory group. By and large the executives' early responses were negative. They felt my methods were hazy and ineffectual — in fact, they did not know exactly what was occurring. Since, however, there were from their viewpoint more things to disapprove than to approve, they at first wrote off my strange behavior as unfortunate and misguided. They found abundant proof that I was heading an undisciplined and even arrogant group of young upstarts who were not only stepping out of their place but who were actually being encouraged by me, rather than being guided, controlled, and disciplined. Some of the comments they made to me will illustrate their initial reactions:

> "Your place is out there in the shop, seeing what is going on."

> "How can you control things sitting here in your office?... Those fellas need your help. You can't just leave them stranded out

> there. They've got a lot of problems. . . . And I think you are breaking down the authority pattern."
>
> "If you are successful, you may do the company great harm. Particularly to the men themselves. If you should ever leave after these men grew into the habit of living this way, there would be a very serious authority problem for your successor and the company, because the foremen might not be given this kind of freedom and it would go very hard for them. . . . At first you throw a seal a fish and then you just have to keep on throwing him another fish."

The Leader's Own Reaction. The collaborative, participative leadership of the group-centered approach is such a marked change from traditional ways that it brings its own conflicts and tensions for the leader. For me, perhaps the most difficult problem of all was learning the art of straightforward and open conduct. One of the major facts of organizational life is the pull and tug of innuendo, intrigue, and manipulation. In the survival-of-the-fittest competition of our daily affairs we so often seem to fall into the habit of evaluating and judging others; and when the interplay of conflicts in an organization grows, the most common way of dealing with them is by indirection. To put ourselves across frequently means to put ourselves subtly around or over somebody else. The subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) devices we use to protect or project ourselves in daily business tend to submerge our capacities for straightforward and open interaction with other men.

A group-centered leader faces the perpetual task of relearning the way to open, straightforward conduct, both for himself and for the people in his organization. This involves much more than an ethical tone — it involves the learning and relearning of some crucial social skills. In order to introduce group-centered leadership in the factory, I had to develop new skills, both to implement my administration of the shop and to cope with the conflicts that were created by this leadership method.

EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES

Perhaps I can more fully communicate the meaning of this method of leadership by describing some specific events and experiences. These represent only a small proportion of the significant happenings of one year's experience with the foremen.

INDIVIDUAL CONTACTS ON ROUTINE MATTERS

Individual contacts occurred on several levels. Often the matters were routine, with all the relevant information at hand. Action or decision was a simple matter of allowing the routine processes to work themselves out. Once the organization was set up structurally and people placed to function in specific capacities, the very momentum of their functioning within the established framework carried the major mass of routine operations. The large bulk of daily affairs were of this kind, and it was simply a matter of perpetuating this work process by maintaining the organization and providing the necessary facilities.

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING ON DAILY PROBLEMS

Underneath this operational or routine level, though still near the surface, was the kind of contact, which occurred frequently in the course of a work day, in which an individual wanted to think through for himself a problem he was facing on the job, but needed a sounding board.

In this kind of situation, a foreman would have much of the information he needed — often all of it. But sometimes his thoughts were not organized in his mind. Sometimes there would be dilemmas as to what course to pursue; sometimes the problem would be one of relations with other members of the organization.

Working on problems of this kind called for a counseling attitude, and counseling techniques — though it was not so much a matter of responding to deep feelings as of facilitating the individual's own thought processes. Usually the men would open up with a direct comment such as:

> "Say, I'd just like to get about five minutes of your time. . . ."
> "I've got a problem I'd like to hash out. . . ."
> "I'd like to kick something around a bit. . . ."

It was usually easy to get these contacts started, because the individual usually plunged right into the matter. If I never advised, or moralized, or quoted some policy or rule, or offered *my* solution to the problem, but merely listened carefully to the other man's view, and if I thought with him and rephrased in my own words my understanding of what he was saying, he usually came up with his own solution. If he was unclear, I would ask questions — not questions that would lead in the direction of *my* solution to the problem but questions that would underscore and clarify his own conflicts, confusions, or inconsistencies. I had to be careful that my questions did not have the effect of implying that I felt he was doing crooked thinking or was being inconsistent. If I questioned him successfully, he could acquire a different perspective and make his own judgments accordingly.

A number of times my thinking *with* a man, rather than trying to give him solutions, brought comments like this one made to me by a foreman: ". . . Here I go answering my own questions. I keep on asking a question and then answering it myself."

In my experience, this type of work with individuals is perhaps the most effective and directly productive of the various contacts between the group-centered leader and the individual members of the group. Following is an example of this kind of situation:

> One day a foreman came into the office and closed the door carefully behind him. He said he had a grave problem and wanted to talk it over. He explained that he shared a material bin in common with another foreman, and couldn't get along without the material in this bin. However, the other foreman had forbidden him to use it.
>
> He explained that we wanted to figure out carefully what to do, and wanted me to think carefully with him. He said: "Now I want to do the right thing here. I realize what's going on. I know that —— has it against me. This has been going on ever since —— (happened). Damn it, I've got nothing against the guy, but I know how he feels about me, and he's bucking me all down the line, and yet I can understand why he feels that way because it goes way back, and there ain't nothing going to change the way he's feeling. And even so, I've still got a job to get done for myself, and him feeling the way he does, it makes it damn tough for me to operate. So all I want to do is figure out real careful the best thing to do because I know he ain't going to change his tactics and all I want to do is just go my way and get my job done."
>
> An hour-long discussion ensued. The foreman talked and I concentrated on understanding his feelings and trying to follow him as he wove deeper into them. Most of his time was spent explaining

past incidents of poor relations he had had with his co-foreman, and trying to evaluate the other foreman's behavior. I neither condoned nor rejected his judgment of the other foreman. When the discussion ended, he had identified for himself what he felt the problem to be, and had decided upon a course of action.

I felt my role here was one of hands-off in the friction between these two men. I had heard from each of them, and each had gradually revealed some deep feelings. However, it seemed more useful for me to provide a place where they could safely work through their own problems, rather than to put myself into the picture to "create harmony" or "fix things up" or "straighten these fellows out." I believed I was doing both men more good by leaving their relationship up to them, and to time, to heal. I felt confident that they would work their problem out together.

Several weeks later I asked the foreman who had come to me with the problem how he was making out. He grinned and said: "Oh, we've got it all worked out. I figured out how to talk to him, and put it up to him. You've got to be scientific on these things."

HANDLING DEEP FEELINGS

Beneath the level of routine, and the level of daily operating problems, was a third level of work which was crucial. This is the level where people function most creatively or else are blocked from effective functioning by some emotional disturbance. I found that many of the barriers to full and effective functioning of the foremen and staff men were difficulties of a deeply personal nature. Before these men could release the creativity that was within them, they sometimes had to cope with problems of emotion, anxiety, insecurity, or fear. It was sometimes possible for me to be helpful in this area.

To work with men in this way, however, I found it was not enough merely to set up the means and the atmosphere for face-to-face contact; it was also necessary for me to learn some skills for coping with developments as men uncovered their own deep feelings. I needed the skills of client-centered counseling: to learn how to listen attentively and to strive for understanding, even though sometimes I could not understand how the other person really felt; to learn not to be "judgmental" and evaluative, but to try to see things the way the other person saw them.

This led me into the intimate problems of people — where I was sometimes uncomfortable — where I sometimes feared to enter. Thus it was also necessary for me to know myself, my own feelings and values, and to learn to respond to people openly and naturally. The more I could understand and accept myself, the more I could accept and understand the feelings and the problems of other people. On the other hand, the more I learned to accept and understand others, the more secure I felt in myself. So the helping worked both ways — and the growth was two-way.

It was not long before I learned that to know some techniques for drawing people out was not enough, and that in fact this could be merely a subtle form of manipulation which would sooner or later be perceived and met with hostile reaction.

Many times men brought up problems of an intimate personal nature — individual problems that were important to them personally and were affecting them emotionally but were not direct business problems. I always took great care to drop all other preoccupations and listen with all possible understanding to the discussion of these problems. Sometimes these matters were tossed off in a very casual and offhand way; sometimes the discussion consisted in little more than a few comments; sometimes it became extended and intent. Sometimes a man would raise a problem again and again, each time going a little deeper into it. I treated these discussions with great respect. All I attempted to do was to understand how the other was feeling, neither advising nor commenting evaluatively. When I really succeeded in understanding the other, there was a distinct feeling of being in communication with him.

These discussions were always voluntary, and they arose only when the individual found silence more painful than talking out his problem. One important principle which I learned from experience was that it was unproductive and unwise to probe beneath the surface of the spoken word or the spoken intent. If I felt no compulsion to teach, to advise, or to moralize, but endeavored simply to understand, I was able to be helpful.

Authority-Centered Contacts

Many of the individual contacts I had were a direct result of the real authority difference between the men in the group and me. There were many times when their effective function required the sanction I could give them or get for them, or required knowledge of my views and limits.

In this area I had considerable difficulty with one particular problem. I wanted to distinguish between matters that really required my support in terms of formal authority, and matters wherein a man sought either to lean on me or to use my authority against someone else.

I had learned that the authority process and the power relationships within the organization could not be ignored. On the other hand, experience had taught me it was unproductive to interfere with the voluntary informal relationships.

Sometimes individuals really needed the official, authoritative support that I could give as plant superintendent. But there were also instances of attempts to get me to take sides with one man against another. The following incident illustrates this kind of situation:

> *Foreman:* Well, I have a problem out here — my men have come to me today and asked me how come they don't get any overtime when the guys over in X's department are coming in on Saturdays and getting in on some of the gravy.
>
> *Supt.:* Your men are wishing they could get some overtime?
>
> *Foreman:* Yeah — well, it's not too much that. I want to hold the costs down in my department and I don't have any overtime for these fellows, but naturally they are going to squawk for overtime if X is going to bring his men in — now that is only natural, don't you think?
>
> *Supt.:* You don't want to bring your men in, but it puts you in a spot if X's men come in and get overtime.
>
> *Foreman:* Sure, and maybe it is none of my business, but I would just like to cite this fact. He has got a bunch of women there, and one good man could do what three of those women do in a day, and that is the reason why he has got to bring those guys in on Saturday to get caught up on his work.
>
> *Supt.:* I see — you feel that if he didn't have those women, but had some men on those jobs, he wouldn't have to work anyone overtime. Have you been able to express your feelings about this to X?
>
> *Foreman:* Oh, hell no, what's the use. Well, now let me ask you, don't you think I am right?

In this case there was a mixture of conditions. This foreman was getting reactions from his men that were causing him difficulty. On the other hand, he had judgments about the policies and performance of his co-foreman. Yet he could not face the other foreman directly; he insisted it was my job to do that. I told him that I realized his problem with his own men was acute, that I could convey his problem to the other foreman but not his judgments about the women workers in the other department. I also said that I was reluctant to carry this communication and hoped we might someday reach a point where each man felt free to carry his feelings directly to the others involved. I really did not know whether his judgments were justified, and I said so. However, I indicated a willingness to sit in with both of them to discuss it. The foreman declined this offer.

Other basic principles I tried to implement were: not to carry messages for others; not to "pull my rank"; and not to deal with matters involving another individual unless he were present. When a discussion involved a third person, I always suggested that he be invited to join the discussion. Often this was very acceptable to the man who had brought the third person's name into the discussion. However, when a man wished to discuss a problem of his own in terms of his feelings about or relations with another individual, I respected this need; I merely made clear, through my manner and my responses, that while accepting the feelings expressed about another, I also respected equally that other person's integrity and feelings. When a man's real problem was a matter of working through his own feelings about another, and not a matter of uncovering information or making a decision or reaching an agreement, my role was one of helping him utilize his own resources to find the solution. I was not always successful, but sometimes I was able to be of considerable help.

Small Groups Initiated by the Foremen

In addition to individual contacts, much of my time was spent meeting with groups. Daily work was most frequently done in small groups that formed around some specific problem. These groups formed spontaneously. Usually when the men concerned brought a problem into our conference room, they had already been at work on it out on the shop floor. My response to the entrance of two or three men was to greet them in as free and easy a way as possible, but to wait for them to start the discussion. When a couple of men came in with a casting and began, "Say, somebody with brains had better come out here and straighten us out . . .," I knew that someone in the front office was on the pan. If someone said, "How about a powwow on . . .," I knew that the meeting was likely to involve considerable discussion.

If, on the other hand, the door opened and two or three men came in with, "Say, can't we put this to bed? It's been kicking around now long enough," I sensed their expectation of a short and to-the-point meeting.

In these problem-centered meetings of small subgroups I gave whatever relevant information or ideas I had, but my role was mainly to assist the men in putting together all the facts, to facilitate their discussion and thinking as they evaluated the facts, and to help them make a decision.

Also I sometimes took over such jobs as record-keeping, writing memoranda or reports, or filling any other needs the group had for coordinating or communicating with other segments of the organization. I did not always undertake this function, because sometimes another member of the group would volunteer or be delegated by the group to do it.

Frequently in these meetings we used the wall pads for listing ideas, statistics, or data as they were needed in discussion. The use of these pads had the effect of reflecting back to the group what was being said, and helped to facilitate the discussion by tying together the contributions of various members. It also produced a natural outline as the group worked through a problem. These notes were filed for reference later. They were also used to communicate information, decisions, situations, and problems to other segments of the company, thus providing an easy means of linking together various strata of the organization.

SUBGROUPS GROWING INTO LARGE GROUPS

The daily meetings of small problem-centered groups could best be characterized as meetings which just developed. No one exactly "called a meeting." A member or two would come in with some issue before them. If we were able, we settled and disposed of the matter then. Frequently, however, before the discussion had barely begun, it would become evident that additional members should be added to the group. Often at the suggestion of someone else, or sometimes at my suggestion, others were invited to join us. Whenever it seemed that persons not present might be involved, I always asked the members present if they were willing to invite the absent members to join us.

With their assent, I would call the missing members. Sometimes the members present would specifically decline to invite another member.

When making a call to invite someone to a meeting, I always explained who was in the meeting, what the issue was, and asked if it were possible for him to join us, or if he wished to. Sometimes members declined to come, thus eliminating themselves from the discussion. Sometimes meetings were deferred because the absent member wished to take part but could not do so at the time, for some reason. At that moment, over the telephone and with the members present participating, we usually established a time to meet.

In all these meetings I was acutely conscious of the men themselves and the dynamics of the organization. One can feel the fluid, dynamic, never-static process of people working together.

In the constant interplay of events in an industrial organization, an administrator can depend upon relationships to evolve naturally and by themselves if he follows a consistent and successful pattern of acceptance and understanding. Permissiveness is an atmosphere which depends almost entirely upon the actions of the leader. However, an administrator can never know and understand all the complex relationships between various members of an organization, any more than he can know and understand all the complex feelings individuals harbor within themselves. Consequently, to prejudge or evaluate individuals or groups or situations is often to misjudge. Many times I have sensed the shifting alliances of various members of the group. Often I was never able to discover just what had happened between men, or why. But it was usually evident when some realignment of relationship had taken place, and if no probing beneath the surface was attempted, and no prejudgment made of how the men should act, their relationship either worked out by itself or emerged later as a specific problem. Once a relationship ruptured to the point of coming out on the surface, it could be dealt with directly.

My evaluations or interferences many times turned out badly when I proceeded on the assumption that I knew how men felt, or when I tried to force "cooperation" or "harmony." One time, in reaction to a comment that I thought was helpful, a foreman said: "Well, buddy, you're calling the shots. You tell me!"

Here is an example from a tape recording of a group meeting from which one member was absent and which he did not want to attend. This meeting followed several days' work on a very difficult problem, one that involved both foremen and men in staff departments — such as personnel or engineering. A great deal of tension had developed.

> *Foreman:* Where's X?
>
> *Supt.:* Well, I saw him a little while ago and he said he didn't feel like coming.
>
> *Foreman:* I wonder why he doesn't want to come?
>
> *Supt.:* He said he felt the meeting would be more successful if he weren't here. I felt it was up to him. I did tell him I didn't feel we could successfully reach a decision without him. . . .
>
> *Foreman:* Well, yeah, I feel he should be in here now.
>
> *Second Foreman:* Absolutely, I think so too. . . .
>
> (Pause)
>
> *Foreman:* Well, the only reason I wanted to get together here was because. . . .
>
> (Discussion proceeded)

This meeting had been called by one foreman who was in distressing need of a decision. Strong differences of opinion had made a decision difficult, and any hasty decision would have been impossible to execute if all the men involved had not been able to find a workable agreement. As it actually developed, the meeting was in fact successful, and a solution was reached, without the missing member. He had sensed reality better than the rest of us!

In this meeting it was my task to facilitate communication in order that feelings and factual data might be sorted out and used by the group. This was more difficult than usual because I knew the group was feeling hostile toward the missing member, and also toward me for not forcing him to come in. I had to be able to accept this hostility and to avoid acting defensively.

It would have been possible here for me to have issued a decision on this matter on the strength of my authority, and my own judgment. However, I believe that even if that decision had been the same as the one the group eventually worked out, the acceptance and execution of it would not have been as effective.

Leader-Initiated Conferences

There were meetings, however, which I initiated and in which I issued instructions, decisions, and information. The incidence of these was very low, for I resorted to this kind of situation only when it was clear to me that the limits within which I myself was working required me to pass things down the line. In these leader-initiated and leader-directed meetings I clearly departed from collaborative or participative methods. By my manner and my responses I made it plain to the men that the subject at hand was one which I could not delegate to the group for decision or consideration. An example of this follows:

> Many of the men were dissatisfied with the manner in which they were paid. They did not like being paid twice a month, but preferred pay day to be either weekly or every two weeks. They were vocal about this, and let me know clearly how they felt.
>
> I conveyed this information to the President and recommended that we go along with the men's request. However, the President was not disposed to change the procedure, and clearly rejected the request.
>
> I later returned to the foremen with the information that the semimonthly pay procedure must prevail. As we broke up the meeting, I said jokingly to a couple of the foremen who had persistently pressed this matter: "Now get off my back on this pay check business, will you?" One of the foremen responded: "Check, Sergeant!"
>
> He was grinning. We had both been in the Army and knew all about "orders from headquarters."

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

We also utilized general group meetings that were not specifically problem-centered. As conditions changed from time to time, the nature of these meetings changed. Sometimes we emphasized budgets, sometimes production, and sometimes we brought up procedural and organizational matters. We used these regular weekly meetings to "catch up on the news," to exchange information among ourselves, to receive information from other segments of the organization, and to formulate statements of problems. From these meetings we gained a sense of tying the loose ends together, a perspective, and a feeling for the continuity of events.

In general my role was to initiate the meetings, to bring to them the data I had accumulated. These data I arranged into a tentative agenda. If there were many subjects I simply listed them on the wall chart. With this as a nucleus, other members suggested other items. We also added items to the agenda when we discovered them during discussion. If only one or two matters were to be taken up, I simply stated them at the beginning of the meeting.

In whatever way I initiated the agenda, I tried, by my manner and by the things I said, to convey to the group members that they were free to alter and adjust it — in fact to control it. After I had initiated the meeting and contributed whatever I had to a tentative agenda, my role became one of attending to the atmosphere of the meeting. I sought to catch the meanings and feelings of individuals, to link together various contributions, to synthesize, to clarify by rephrasing or reflecting statements, to highlight or identify conflicts and agreements. Of course I added my own contributions when I had something relevant to contribute. I kept track of the items I had placed on the agenda, but if the group had more urgent inclinations I adjusted my own sense of urgency just like any other member of the group, and allowed my own subjects to come up in their own time. It has been interesting to me to note that at times when I did assert my authority to deal with certain subjects that I wanted to pursue, when these were in conflict with the group's inclination, the quality of the members' work on the problem seemed to be much lower than when they freely accepted a problem. In fact, I have actually experienced instances when a problem was not solved because the group was not prepared to work on it; and conversely, later on I have seen these rejected problems taken up by the group and solved with astonishing effectiveness.

Another detail of my role was to keep track of time, and to remind the group occasionally of the time. This I tried to do in a way that would merely make the group aware of time limits.

Record-keeping was generally left to me. Although the group frequently assigned members specific tasks of gathering or producing data, it was generally my task to make notes and keep track of decisions, tentative and pending problems, and data to be held in reserve. I saw my function as simply one of maintaining and organizing these various data for the group's future use. Only if the subjects were specifically my own did I keep the data alive and use them to pursue and develop action or decisions. My basic attitude here was that each group meeting was a new and different meeting. Many of the facts and dynamics would have changed since previous meetings; so unless other members specifically wished to refer to an earlier one, I was content to deal with each meeting as a new situation.

One problem I always had with these weekly meetings was my conflict between the agenda and a wish for a free and open meeting. Because of the pressure of time and the need to solve problems, it was necessary to find ways of speeding the meetings along and keeping them within the direct range of business. To a very great degree it was possible to allow the group to control the agenda and work freely on the problems at hand, yet at the same time to speed up the process in the interests of time and efficiency without seriously thwarting participation. However, over and above this kind of work, I frequently sensed the rich opportunity here, as well as the latent and underlying need, for a deeper group process, something in the nature of group therapy.

The members themselves sometimes expressed this feeling. For instance, once a couple of foremen and I were chatting about the tendency of daily work to pull one's nose down closer and closer to the grindstone, narrowing one's horizons. One foreman said:

> You know, we sometimes shake our heads and find ourselves standing out there in the middle of the aisle staring at each other, as if to say, "Why you silly ——, what are you try'n to tell me?" And even when we're the best of friends we lose sight of each other and get to wondering what the hell's wrong with the other guy. Sometimes in these meetings we get a chance to sit back and see things right again.

I often felt that more could be done to help men develop their relationships, explore their own feelings and those of their fellow workers, and to discover what impact their personality had on others. In our meetings, particularly in small subgroups, much was accomplished in the way of personality development. However, much more could have been done if there had been less restricting limits on time. Sometimes, at the temporary expense of business affairs, I allowed our weekly meetings to go in this direction, but never as far as I should have liked. It has always been a hope of mine actually to establish some meetings which would be directly devoted to the development of self-awareness, insights in interpersonal relationships, and individual growth through a group-sharing of feelings and experiences.

SOME OUTCOMES AND PROBLEMS

Out of my efforts to operate the factory by the methods just described, there emerged some definite consequences and some puzzling problems. Although I felt that the effort was very successful and that it definitely appeared to fulfill the predictions of the group-centered point of view, nevertheless some difficulties persisted. These outcomes and problems, as I saw them, are briefly outlined below.

OUTCOMES

Growth of Individuals. An outstanding consequence of this leadership approach was the growth of individual men. I believe all the men grew measurably, but there were some instances of unusual development.

One foreman, when I first knew him, was sulky, stubborn, defiant, and singularly inarticulate. I had heard it said of him before, "He has some pretty good qualities, but he's too bull-headed. He'll never make a foreman — can't talk or handle people." But I watched this foreman develop into one of the most articulate, soundest-thinking, and most natural of administrators.

Another foreman told me directly that his experience during the period described here had changed his whole outlook, had made him a leader among his friends and in his community. He even cited an instance where, serving jury duty, he had become the natural leader of the jury, and he related this specifically to his growth on the job as a member of our group. When he had become a foreman, incidentally, he was on the verge of failure in another department.

Still another foreman recovered a life which he (and much of the world around him) had considered virtually wasted. He developed, grew, and became a most effective man both on his job and in his community.

There are other examples, but it suffices to say that individual growth was abundantly evident. For me, personally, this was also the most important and rewarding consequence.

The Development of a Cohesive, Effective Group. The second consequence, and a goal I had directly sought, was strong cohesion of the group itself. After the early stages, when we had really worked together for some time in the way I have described, the group was able to function to a striking degree from its own resources. I tested this in many ways, and felt very much gratified with the number of instances in which I found myself *not* needed. The factory began to function smoothly, efficiently, and profitably — and although I was indeed much involved in a number of knotty and perplexing problems, I believe it can truly be said that the group was running the operation. Leadership had been distributed, so that I was able to work with more effectiveness where I could contribute most, while other members of the group actually took over certain leadership functions which they were better able to carry out.

Improvement in Morale. It seems almost needless to say that morale improved. And it should be pointed out that there were no "discipline" problems, no problems of "getting men to take responsibility." In fact, my problem actually became one of keeping up with the group and giving it the quality of performance and thought that its vigorous, energetic, and enthusiastic activity required. I had to scoot to keep up.

Reduction in Tensions. The reduction of tensions is not necessarily an unqualified plus item, for it can be argued that tensions motivate people to accomplishment. However, the really relevant point, it seems to me, is that there are different kinds of tensions. What I observed to be a consequence of this process of leadership and group interaction was the reduction or elimination of the kinds of tensions which keep individuals in the negative, unproductive areas of their personalities. The kinds of tensions, organizational and individual, which caused the men to react to fears, conflicts, and self-reducing stimuli were relieved; and the result was to free them to utilize their energies in constructive creative work, thus minimizing the loss stemming from anxieties. This occurred to a recognizable and marked degree.

The Release of Creative Productivity. The observation that "productivity increased" is not quite adequate to describe the result I observed.

Not only did the men work harder, do more, respond better to conditions — they did all this with a special quality, a quality of creativity. They worked with zest, and with real thought and interest. As the members individually grew and functioned more fully, and as the group became a self-propelled, closely knit, and smoothly working organization, the men really began to put themselves into the job. They did not stand in unison and sing the company song. They argued and worked and sweated — but with respect for themselves, respect for each other, respect for their men, and respect for the company. They gave of themselves individually in a way that leads me to characterize their productivity as creative.

SOME PERPLEXING PROBLEMS

Some puzzling problems emerged along with the successes. Probably it can be generalized that anyone in a traditional organization who wants to utilize a leadership pattern that frees people for creative and independent work will encounter many of the same difficulties.

As soon as I understood the leadership role to be one of supporting and augmenting people, rather than controlling and reducing them, it was necessary to reassess my own situation, my own values, limits, needs, and resources. I found it necessary to acquire different skills, to understand myself better, to find ways of resolving my own insecurities, and to be prepared for the consequences of a "different" — even controversial — role. I encountered some very real problems in this process.

Conflict with Traditional Patterns. One of my most difficult predicaments derived from the fact that the traditional organization pattern itself was a barrier to the kind of leadership I hoped to use. The traditional view of responsibility and authority stands for standards of performance with which my conduct was in conflict. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that my methods did not coincide with traditional expectations.

I found that in the line position I held, the total organization expected certain definite things of me — close supervision, much giving of orders and instructions, much decision-making. My actions and methods, however, sometimes did not meet these expectations and therefore put me in conflict with others.

It was necessary for me to try to understand these differences, to accept them without resentment or insecurity, and to try to adapt my chosen approach to the current realities of the organization — but without compromising my principles. I learned that organizational limits and dynamics change, but that these must be respected at the time they exist.

Moreover, the actual authority process and the vertical hierarchy itself set up an automatic and inescapable dependency situation. My problem was to minimize the consequences of dependency without ignoring the reality that there actually are limits to freedom of action in an organization.

When I felt insecure from the pressures brought to bear on me from these conflicts, I sometimes acted in hostile and aggressive self-defense. It was necessary for me to learn to meet these pressures directly and to strive to deal with them in an accepting and unaggressive way. Sometimes personal counseling helped me acquire the inner security necessary to cope with these anxieties constructively and positively.

Foremen Resistance to Delegation of Authority. Resistance to the delegation of authority came both from foremen who were not yet ready to accept it, and from executives who were not able to countenance my giving authority away.

Some members of the foreman and staff groups tried in many ways to resist and refuse the proffered authority. Sometimes they would come right out and tell me, "I think it's your job," or "You're calling the shots," or "It might be better if you did it."

This reaction was most frequent in the beginning, and became less so as time went on. My way of handling it was not to reject the men's resistance to taking authority, but to try to understand why they resisted, and to work with these causes. As the men grew, individually, and as changes occurred in the organization itself, this difficulty decreased.

Executive Resistance to Delegation of Authority. Executive resistance to my delegation of authority was more difficult to handle. It largely sprang from the executives' view of authority and responsibility. The authoritarian method of dealing with people seemed to me to be based upon this fundamental technique: on the one hand, reducing people to acquiescence and keeping them under control by withholding from them or threatening to withhold from them the means of fulfilling their needs; or on the other hand, providing or promising to provide the means of fulfilling their needs. This technique reduces the importance of an individual's particular quality of creativity and productivity and initiative, and subordinates the individual to the will and objectives of someone else.

As a practical matter, I believed the reducing and controlling and manipulating technique to be inefficient and ineffective if long-term results were taken into account. However, executives who saw the function of leadership as "knowing the answers" judged my methods to be impractical and weak. They felt that it was my responsibility to know what should be done in any given situation; that it was part of my job to provide myself with the means of finding out what the subordinates were doing and of controlling their actions. Executives said to and of me:

> "Why, you're dreaming — you actually let those guys tell you what they're going to do!"
> "The foremen have you buffaloed."
> "Somebody ought to be out there running that place."

They did not see the matter as I did. To me the foremen and staff men seemed not only competent, but capable of a great deal more than they had been producing. It appeared to me that they were in fact rendered less productive by the very actions of executives who went about "getting results," for often the intrusion of executive action merely piled another burden on the shoulders of the men who were already carrying a heavy load. Here is a typical quote from a foreman, illustrating this point:

> How in the hell can anybody with a white shirt sit in there and know what the hell I'm up against out here? They can't know what I've got out here because they aren't out here. But by ——, I'm up agin' it, and I know what I've got here. I know because I can feel it. It's not something you can tie down. It's a feeling, and how're you gonna defend yourself when they bring out those figures from the front office?

Threat to Traditional Executive Prerogatives. Some executives resented my methods because they felt that a downward diffusion of authority and responsibility constituted a threat to their own positions. They simply did not want to share their power and authority, and resisted power-letting precedents.

These executives objected to both my goals and my methods. They believed that decisive, direct, "hard-fisted" methods were required. These sentiments were usually marked by a narrow allowance for error, a strong sense of the need to prod people, and a tendency to be impatient with deviations and "irrelevancies."

The point of conflict was my concern with the growth of people. I felt rewarded when I saw people working things out for themselves, and disappointed when their contributions were blocked by the assertion of sheer authority. Some executives considered this a soft view, out of place in business. Here are some typical comments:

> You are babying people too much. By spending so much time listening to their troubles you give them implicit approval, and they lose hours mulling and stewing over matters that are not important enough to receive more than brief attention.
>
> How can you get anything done by holding these people's hands? You sit around with them talking about trivial matters that could be settled in a few minutes by a competent person. And by doing this, you also encourage people lower down in the organization to get all involved in matters that are none of their concern. That's what we're here for. We are the executives with the know-how and the experience to decide how things should be done. It's your job to tell these people what their jobs are, and see that they do it.
>
> You shouldn't give these men so much sympathy. That tears down respect for the department heads and wastes time. You should handle these men in such a way that they respect the top people. The realistic fact is that the top men have the authority and power, so you should bring them around to a respect for this authority. A man can't give orders until he knows how to take orders.
>
> A committee is a roomful of people spending hours daily on what one good man could do in a few minutes.

Granted the point of view of the traditionally minded executives, their observations were not wholly inaccurate. The difference between us was a fundamental one — a difference both of goals and of methods.

Nevertheless, my experiences had taught me that men in an organization respond to manipulative, prodding, and controlling techniques with various protective devices, both direct and subtle, which are singularly effective in thwarting the will of the traditional authoritarian. On one hand, the traditional leader experiences bewilderment, frustration, and exasperation when "things are not carried out," when "these confounded people don't know how to take responsibility," when "people in this organization don't take any initiative," or when "what we need around here is somebody who can drive and get things done."

On the other hand, the subordinates can be heard to say among themselves:

> "Old (so-and-so) is on the rampage today, boys — steer clear."
> "Don't bring your troubles to me, buddy, us peasants aren't paid to think."
> "Hell, yes, I know it's upside down — I tried to tell them but there wasn't anybody listening, so orders are orders — we make it upside down. The only thing is, I am going to make damn sure I'm not around here to hold the sack when the old boys find out it doesn't work."

The Difficulty of Understanding This Leadership Approach. Many of the difficulties seemed to come from lack of understanding. Group-centered, participative, collaborative leadership is a long-range, slow process. People on all levels of a traditional organization are accustomed to the traditional controlling, authoritarian system. Ways of behaving in this structure have long been established, and the methods I tried meant change from the established patterns. Social change so often meets resistance and difficult going because it is not understood and is therefore perceived as threatening. Because results were slow and intangible — for the growth of people is not readily visible — there was the considerable problem of gaining the confidence of the organization both upward and downward.

Out of the total experience came one clear working rule for me. An organization by its very nature and its very existence imposes limitations on the actions of its members. These limitations must be understood, accepted, and observed. To introduce group-centered leadership into an organization, one must be prepared to go only as far and as rapidly as the organization can actually accept. One cannot earn acceptance and understanding by imposing ideas on others. One must find enough inner security to understand the feelings of those who attack or threaten him. Only then can he truly communicate with these people. Once real communication is achieved, understanding will follow and changes can occur.

From this effort to apply group-centered principles to factory administration, I definitely conclude that it *can* be done. It is a process and an attitude, more than a system. And yet group-centered leadership can be clearly understood in a definite, systematic way. It is not the easiest way to live — at least at the outset. I believe we have only begun to learn about the resourcefulness and creativity of men and organizations. And yet it would surely seem that if we continue to work with patience and unflagging inquiry into the needs and resources of people, we will improve our effectiveness and our world.

An Evaluation of an Industrial Leader

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For the purpose of obtaining an evaluation of the Plant Superintendent's attempt to apply group-centered leadership, a follow-up study was conducted approximately one year after he had assumed his position as head of plant production. Inasmuch as the data collected in this study strongly support many of our hypotheses about the effects and outcomes of group-centered leadership, some of the findings are presented briefly in the following pages.

In the preceding chapter, the Plant Superintendent attempted to describe accurately his attitudes and behavior as he tried out a form of group-centered leadership, yet his description is based, naturally, upon his own observations and interpretations. Because of this limitation, it was considered important to find out how others perceived his leadership and assessed its effect. Did the foremen see the Plant Superintendent's leadership as he himself saw it? What was the impact of this new type of leadership on a group of foremen accustomed to traditional supervision? Were there any outcomes, positive or negative, as judged by both the foremen and the members of the management group?

To discover answers to these questions the writer and a colleague[1] conducted interviews with all of the foremen working under the Plant Superintendent, with all of the management group, and with a small number of workers in the plant. The interviews were structured to the extent that certain specific questions were asked of each interviewee, yet all the questions were worded in a very general way and the interviewees were encouraged to give rather free responses. Notes were taken during the interviews, and whenever possible, the words of the interviewees were written down verbatim.

They were told that their answers would be analyzed along with those of others, and would not be identified by the names of the interviewees; consequently they could feel free to give honest answers. No one refused to give an interview; no one expressed concern about possible consequence of answering the questions. In the judgment of both interviewers, the set-up for the interviews involved very little threat to the interviewees.

Answers to all questions were subjected to a content analysis; statements were categorized and tallied. No attempt was made to determine the reliability of the categorization by using two independent categorizers, because the answers were of such nature that this was not considered necessary. In most cases the interviewees' statements were either extracted verbatim or merely condensed and abstracted.

The limitations of this simple follow-up study are fairly obvious. The materials collected are subjective opinions and judgments rather than objective and carefully quantified data. For example, rather than devise an objective way of measuring production, we merely asked for the foremen's judgments as to the effect of the Plant Superintendent's leadership on production. Furthermore, the data do not permit us to make a distinction between the leader's methods, on the one hand, and his personality and character, on the other, so that one cannot conclude with certainty that all the positive outcomes reported were due entirely to this new type of leadership. Finally, there was no control group, such as a group of foremen working under a traditional leader. Thus again it is not possible to state that all the changes reported are attributable exclusively to group-centered leadership.

[1] Robert K. Burns, Professor in the School of Business and Director of the Industrial Relations Center, University of Chicago.

Despite these limitations, the study provided a check upon the Plant Superintendent's perceptions, because it demonstrated the extent to which his description of behavior and events was supported by the perceptions of those working under him. In addition, through interviews with men at all levels in the organization, we discovered how people reacted to this kind of leadership in their everyday relations with the Plant Superintendent. His leadership was more than a vague theory existing in his mind — it was a dynamic new approach to individuals and groups that had repercussions throughout the organization.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLANT SUPERINTENDENT'S LEADERSHIP

To learn what the foremen and the management group saw in the leadership behavior of the Plant Superintendent — what struck them as the principal characteristics of his leadership — their responses to two questions were analyzed and categorized:

> *Question:* What kind of leader is Jim? That is, what strikes you as the chief characteristics of his leadership? What do you notice most? What stands out?
>
> *Question:* In what important ways (if any) does he differ from the usual boss you have worked for?

Eleven foremen and twelve "management group" personnel (department heads and junior executives in staff positions) were interviewed. All gave at least one characteristic of the Plant Superintendent's leadership. The complete data are summarized in Table 7. The three columns of figures show the frequency with which statements in each category were made by (*a*) foremen, (*b*) management group, and (*c*) both.

The characteristics most frequently reported by both groups reveal a pattern of behavior remarkably consistent with our conception of group-centered leadership — the Plant Superintendent was perceived as a leader who:

1. basically trusted the wisdom and creative capacities of his foremen and thus delegated responsibility to them;

2. consequently utilized consultative and facilitative methods, helping individuals and groups reach their own decisions;
3. listened with understanding as they expressed their feelings and ideas in their search for solutions to problems;
4. followed through on their decisions and gave the foremen backing and support;
5. then left the men alone to carry out their decisions without close supervision and surveillance;
6. nevertheless made his own needs felt through open, honest, and straightforward communication.

Table 7

Leadership Characteristics of Superintendent

	Foremen	*Management*	*Total*
Listens with understanding — willing to discuss problems, open to ideas and suggestions, gives time to listen to problems	20	7	27
Supports and helps — backs you up, is on your side, remembers your problem	14	5	19
Uses consultative and facilitating methods — uses team or consultative approach, helps group reach better decisions, facilitates cooperation	10	9	19
Avoids close and autocratic supervision — does not over-boss, dictate, rule by the book, stays out of shop	15	3	18
Delegates authority and trusts group — relies on their judgment, has faith in creativity of men, permits group decisions	11	6	17
Specific traits — polite, patient, broad-minded, calm, keeps temper	10	2	12

Communicates openly and honestly — tells you what he thinks, you can trust what he says	8	3	11
Brings out best in men — has common touch with worker	7	1	8
General favorable comments — doing fine job, fortunate to have him, wonderful leader, none better	7	0	7
Non-evaluative — does not "eat you out," criticize; makes you feel secure and free of fear	6	0	6
Makes decisions cautiously — gets facts first, searches deeply, no snap decisions	4	2	6
Capacity to learn — knows a lot about technical side of plant, grasps wide range of subjects, good judgment makes up for lack of "know-how"	2	3	5
General unfavorable comments — overly concerned with employer-employee relations, gets excited over details, doesn't clear decisions with one of staff management group, some desire on foremen's part to have more rules for workers, just now getting to be practical and cost-conscious	1	4	5
TOTAL STATEMENTS			160

The fact that only five out of 160 statements could be interpreted as suggesting undesirable characteristics is as remarkable as the consistency between the leader's perceived characteristics and those of an ideal group-centered leader. Not only was the Plant Superintendent perceived as doing what he intended to do as a group-centered leader, but his behavior had a preponderantly favorable reaction from both foremen and management.

•

OUTCOMES OF THE PLANT SUPERINTENDENT'S LEADERSHIP

Another purpose of the follow-up study was to evaluate outcomes of group-centered leadership and to determine whether people perceived any effects, positive or negative, from the Plant Superintendent's new method of leadership. From the interviews, data were obtained bearing on the effects of his leadership on (*a*) the practical operation of the plant (production, costs, quality, etc.), (*b*) the behavior and attitudes of the foremen as a group, and (*c*) the behavior and attitudes of the foremen as individuals. The interviewees were asked to report both favorable and unfavorable effects of this new type of leadership.

Table 8 presents the categories into which fell all of the statements derived from the following question:

> *Question:* Have you noticed any good effects (positive outcomes) from his way of operating? Either on you, on others, or on the plant as a whole?

By far the most frequent statements were those indicating positive effects upon the working relationships among the foremen. Both the foremen and the management group felt that, as a result of the Plant Superintendent's way of operating, the foremen had worked harder, thought more creatively, felt happier and more closely identified with the company, and provided better supervision for their own workers. Furthermore, the group of foremen were perceived, both by the foremen themselves and by the management group, as working more cooperatively and less competitively, working as a team with more of a "we attitude" and less backbiting.

Of particular interest were the statements indicating increased production, increased profits, reduction of costs, better decisions, and improvement in equipment, tools, and physical facilities of the plant. This finding was corroborated by the answers to a specific question about

Table 8

Positive Outcomes from Superintendent's Leadership

	Foremen	*Management*	*Total*
Increased cooperation and coordination — between foremen, between departments, between foremen and management, between Superintendent and foremen; less back-biting and buck-passing; harmony replaced chaos; more "we" and "team" attitude, better fellowship	9	12	21
Positive effect upon foremen as individuals — better supervision, working harder, more identification with company, enjoy job more, happier, more creative, doing better job, more encouraged about future, getting educated, learning and developing	11	8	19
Increased production and profits	5	6	11
Better decisions and solutions to problems — problems get solved, management group more effective in solving problems	2	5	7
Improvement in planning and tooling up	3	2	5
More efficiency and cost reduction	1	3	4
Improved communication — foremen have more information, they know what's going on	2	1	3
Improved worker morale	2	1	3
Less turnover of workers and foremen	0	1	1
General comments — better feeling, higher morale	3	4	7
Specific changes or improvement in operation	4	7	11

production asked of the management group. Three of the twelve members of this group felt production had increased, eight felt production had improved in other ways — lower costs, improved quality — while only one felt that production was slightly lower.

These data strongly suggest that group-centered leadership is more than a mere "human relations-oriented" way of leading men — a highly desirable yet impractical compromise with strong, hard-headed, production-oriented, and "efficient" leadership, as so many industrial leaders are inclined to believe. Group-centered leadership may, as these data suggest, result in tangible, practical, dollars-and-cents improvements. In short, when a group of people are delegated authority and responsibility, when they feel trusted and respected, when they are creatively solving their own problems, when they are working together in cooperation and harmony, and when they enjoy their work — then they also accomplish the objectives of the group more effectively. In this group — an industrial organization whose objective is making products at the lowest cost — there is evidence of higher production, reduced costs, higher quality of production, and better long-range planning and tooling up.

One of the hypotheses growing out of our experience with group-centered leadership is that people who themselves work under a group-centered leader will alter their own leadership patterns with men working under them. One of the questions asked of both the foremen and the management group was:

> *Question:* Since working under the Superintendent, have you changed in any way your own leadership or way of operating with the workers? How? What has been the effect upon the workers?

Table 9 summarizes the responses to this question. There it can be seen that much of the Plant Superintendent's leadership pattern rubbed off on the foremen, and some on the management group itself. To this finding, however, must be added the puzzling fact that the workers interviewed — those working directly under the foremen — did not feel that their foremen had changed in their mode of supervision. Of the nine workers interviewed, admittedly a very small sample from the total population of around 250, five said their supervisor had not changed, only two re-

Table 9

Effect of Superintendent's Leadership on Leadership of Foremen and Management Group

	Foremen	*Management*	*Total*
Creation of accepting psychological atmosphere for worker — putting him at ease, encouraging expression of feelings, listening and understanding feelings and ideas	7	1	8
Less use of authoritative approach, avoidance of giving orders; stresses "we approach," uses consultative methods, group meetings	2	4	6
Greater faith and trust in workers, respects their ideas, delegates more responsibility and authority, gives them more freedom, lets them think for themselves	4	1	5
More able to accept criticism, admit mistakes, less tendency to believe he is always right, more tendency to hear both sides of problem	3	1	4
General and unspecific — better feeling, use Supt.'s approach, pattern my behavior after him	3	1	4
Always used this approach to leadership, always believed it was best approach	0	4	4
More personal contact with employees	3	0	3
No effect	2	1	3
Keeps better records, puts things in writing, uses chart pads and blackboard	2	0	2
Do more creative thinking about my own job, more efficient, tightened up my loose practices	2	0	2
More cooperative and helpful to other foremen	1	0	1
More sensitive to human factors in an organization	0	1	1
Let workers know what I expect; clarify my job to them	1	0	1
Gave me sanction to use this approach in my own supervision	1	0	1
No answer	0	3	3

Table 10

Negative Outcomes from Superintendent's Leadership

	Foremen	*Management*	*Total*
No really unfavorable outcomes	12	3	15
Sometimes takes long time to make decisions, but in long run may come out with a good one or give people more learning	1	3	4
Specific problem needs attention, need for policy decision	1	0	1
Production might be raised if Supt. would push some guys harder, but this would have bad effects. Actually foremen beginning to get on slackers — this better than Supt. doing it	1	0	1
Sometimes Supt. runs into trouble with management group	1	0	1
Supt. may give in too much with employees	0	1	1
Doesn't get around to the departments enough	0	1	1
May create problem if Supt. leaves — foremen will be unhappy with another kind of leadership	0	1	1
Pressure from top management for all executives to be this kind of leader	0	1	1
Were it not for incentive system, this method of leadership might not be so good	0	1	1
Effect on older men with younger men pushing up. They'll have to learn to work together with the younger men	0	1	1
Uninterpretable answer	1	0	1

ported any change, and five of the nine said their supervisor had always been good. "Good" in these cases, however, usually meant that "he did not bother the workers" or "left us alone." One explanation for these findings is that the foremen, in contrast to the Plant Superintendent, had not had the opportunity to learn specific skills and methods for implementing group-centered leadership. Another, and one that seems more plausible, is that the foremen had not yet given to their men the same amount of autonomy, authority, and responsibility as had the Plant Superintendent. At the time this study was done, that seemed to the foremen too radical and risky a step to take.

What about the negative or unfavorable outcomes of this kind of leadership? Table 10 summarizes the responses to the question:

> *Question:* Have you noticed any unfavorable effects (negative outcomes) from his way of operating? On you, on others, or on the plant as a whole?

Of the twenty-nine statements given in response to this question, fifteen were denials that there were any unfavorable outcomes, and only fourteen suggested such outcomes. Interesting too is the fact that of these fourteen statements, nine were made by members of the management group and only five by the foremen. The only unfavorable effect felt by more than one person was that the Superintendent's kind of group decision-making sometimes took too much time, yet all the respondents were willing to grant that there were also certain favorable by-products of this type of group participation.

In conclusion, it seems safe to say that the response to group-centered leadership in this industrial organization was overwhelmingly favorable on the part of both foremen and management. Both groups also were aware of this type of leadership — that is, they knew what the Plant Superintendent was doing and realized how it differed from traditional leadership approaches. And despite a somewhat negative or skeptical initial reaction to his method of leadership, both the foremen and management group later felt it was "paying off" in "practical" outcomes as well as in improvements in the "human" or psychological aspects of the organization.

period any change, and five of grouping said there had always been good. "Good" in these cases, however, usually meant that "he did not bother the workers" or "let us alone." One explanation for these findings is that the foremen, as a body, [illegible] had not had the opportunity to learn specific skills and methods for encouraging group-centered leadership. Another, and one that seems more plausible, is that the foremen did not yet quite understand the concept of autonomy, authority, and responsibility as did the Plant Superintendent. At the same time [illegible] the foreman too radical and sharp a change.

What about the negative or unfavorable outcomes of this sort of leadership? Table 10 summarizes the responses to this question:

> Question: Have you noticed any unfavorable effects (negative outcomes) from this sort of supervision? On the [illegible] of the plant as a whole?

Of the seventy-nine statements given in response to this question, fifteen were denial that there were any unfavorable outcomes and only fourteen suggested such outcomes. Interesting too is the fact that of these fourteen statements, nine were made by members of the management group and only five by the foremen. The only criticism the [illegible] felt by more than one person was that the Superintendent's method of group decision-making sometimes took too much time. But all of the respondents were willing to grant that there were also certain favorable by-products of this type of group participation.

In conclusion, it seems safe to say that the [illegible] leadership in this industrial organization was overwhelmingly favorable on the part of both foremen and management. Both groups not only were aware of this type of leadership — [illegible] the Plant Superintendent was doing and realized how different [illegible] leadership approaches. And despite a [illegible] reaction to his method of leadership, both the foremen and management group later felt it was "working out satisfactorily" [illegible] as well as of improvements in the "human" [illegible] of the organization.

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